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ABSTRACT

Oral histories provide background information for five essays which address the development of country schools in Western Kansas during the late 1800's. The first paper provides a historical review of the founding of country schools in Western Kansas, with specific country schools (many are now historical sites) described. The second paper portrays country schools as being the heart of the rural community where potluck dinners, minstrel shows, 4-H Club meetings, literary meets, church and Sunday school, ball games and most other community activities were held. Teachers, their roles, rules, and regulations are reviewed in the third paper. The basics, reading, writing, arithmetic, and recitation, which were stressed in the country school, are presented in the fourth paper via stories dealing with the early classrooms and instructional materials. The last paper portrays the public and parochial country school as one of the major elements in Western Kansas that helped immigrants learn American customs, history, language, and patriotism. Among the ethnic groups discussed are: American Indians, Volga-Germans (German Russians), Blacks, French, Swedes, Mennonites, and Czechoslovakians. Appended to the second paper is a list of the 104 historic site forms completed and a list of 35 oral interviewees. (AH)

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COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY: Humanities on the Frontier

WESTERN KANSAS COUNTRY SCHOOLS

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COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY: HUMANITIES ON THE FRONTIER

The Mountain Plains Library Association is pleased to be involved in this project documenting the country school experience. Funding of this project from the National Endowment for the Humanities, cost sharing and other contributions enabled us all to work with the several state-based Humanities Committees as well as many other state and local libraries, agencies and interested citizens. We are deeply impressed not only by the enthusiasm for this work by all concerned but by the wealth of experience brought to bear in focusing attention on—and recapturing—this important part of history, and how we got here. This project seems to identify many of the roots and "character formation" of our social, political and economic institutions in the West.

Already the main Project objective seems to be met, stimulating library usage and increasing circulation of historical and humanities materials in this region. Public interest is rising in regional, state and local history. Oral history programs are increasing with greater public participation. The study of genealogy—and the search for this information—is causing much interest in consulting—and preserving—historical materials. What has been started here will not end with this project. The immediate results will tour the entire region and be available for any who wish the program, film, and exhibit. There will be more discussion of—and action on—the issues involving the humanities and public policies, past and present. The Mountain Plains Library Association is proud to be a partner in this work, the Country School Legacy, and its contribution to understanding humanities on the frontier.

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Donna Jones

COUNTRY SCHOOLS AS HISTORIC SITES

Country schools beamed throughout the prairie of western Kansas as beacons of hope for a better, richer life for the children of the early settlers. Schools were named for families in an area, the dreams of settlers, animals in an area, Biblical terms, Biblical characters, historical terms, old communities that used to be near sites of schools and much more. Significant names include Hopewell, Buzzard's Roost, Mt. Olive, Monticello, Soddy, Union, Pleasant Ridge, Pleasant Hill, Antelope, Prairie Rose, Gem, Center, Lone Star, North Star, South Star, Sunflower, Spring Branch and Olive Branch, to name but a few.

Settlers came to western Kansas in the late 1880's. Most established homesteads and then turned their attention to building schools for their children. The pioneer dream was for the children to have a better life than their parents through education.

The first schools in Kansas were taught by missionaries. The Indian pupils had teachers such as Reverend Isaac McCoy, Jatham Meeker and his wife.[1]

In 1885 the First Territorial Legislature passed a law to establish "common schools and thus laid the foundation for our public school system."[2]

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[1]Anna E. Arnold, A History of Kansas (Topeka: The State of Kansas, 1919), p. 49.

[2]Ibid., p. 187.

In 1859 the Kansas Legislature passed basic school laws that are our foundation for today's system. The minimum school term was 3 months.[3]

Many of the first schools in Kansas were subscription schools where students paid tuition to provide a salary for the teacher and whatever other school expenses there might be. The Cameron story is typical of how subscription schools began. The Cameron family moved to Kansas in May, 1878 to homestead land in Norton County. After building a house and a community house for church, one of the first topics was school. However, money was a problem because the area they lived in was near the Norton and Decatur county line, so funding would be difficult; and since Decatur County was not organized until 1879 no school could be started.

In the early fall a meeting of 5 heads of their households was held at Captain Higgason's home. Each man wanted the school near his home, and they didn't know how they would pay the teacher. The meeting ended in an argument, and all left with bad feelings. It was not until the winter of 1879 that education was discussed. In 1879 there was a subscription school started in Roderick Cameron's home. Miss Gettys was the teacher in Clayton, but the school only lasted 3 months. Families couldn't pay the $1 a month.[4]

Education started in Decatur County when Mrs. George Miller taught neighbor children in her home. In the winter of 1877-78 a subscription school was taught by Mr. Cabot Miller, with 30 pupils attending. Miss Ella Van Cleve taught the next summer. Then twelve school districts were organized in the county February 3, 1879. Most of these early Decatur

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Roderick Cameron, Pioneer Days in Kansas, A Homesteader's Narrative of Early Settlement and Farm Development on the High Plains Country of Northwest Kansas (Belleville, Kansas: Cameron Book Company, 1951), pp. 48-59.

County schools were made of logs.[5]

By May, 1863, over 16,000 pupils were attending 500 common Kansas schools with almost 600 teachers.[6] In 1882 there were 269,945 children enrolled in school for an average term of 5.7 months, with 3,342 male teachers and 4,808 female teachers.[7] Most of these early schools didn't have chairs or desks. Many of the benches lacked a back.

According to school district laws: "The State establishes free schools for the sake of securing good citizens. No one can be a good citizen unless he has a fair understanding, at least, of the workings of his own government -- the machinery of public affairs."[8]

The County Superintendent of Public Instruction created school districts and had the power to revise boundaries as necessary. Each district had to have at least fifteen persons under twenty and over five years of age. Bonds for a district couldn't "exceed five percent of the valuation of all property on the tax rolls." The County Superintendent gave school districts a number as their legal name: School District No. _____.

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[5]Katie B. Cornell, A History of the School Districts of Decatur County, Kansas (n.p., July, 1940), (manuscript) not paged.

[6]F. L. Pinet, "Seventy-Five Years of Education in Kansas" (Address at Kansas State Teachers' Association at Topeka, November 4-5, 1938), (Manuscript), p. 5.

[7]Third Biennial Report of the State Board of Agriculture Kansas, vol. III (n.p., 1881-82) p. 630.

[8]James Hulme Canfield, Local Government in Kansas (Philadelphia: Cowperthwaite and Company, 1885), p. 5.

Annual Meetings were held at the school in August on the second Thursday at 2:00 p.m. The officers who were elected were a director and a clerk or treasurer. The length of the school year (not less than three months), whether a woman or man would be employed as teacher, and what the tax would be to run the school were all decided. The District Board was the three officers. They actually ran the school. They levied the tax, dispersed the funds, hired the teacher, decided upon the textbooks, took care of the school building, could suspend students, and they had to visit school at least once each term.

Joint districts were from two or more counties. Union districts were when districts united to provide better instruction.

The Compulsory Law required children between eight and fourteen to attend at least twelve weeks of school per year unless there was a reason they couldn't. A school library could be established by use of a "small tax," "not more than $40 if the taxable property in the district does not exceed $20,000; $20,000-$30,000, not more than $45; $30,000-$50,000, not more than $50; $50,000 and upwards, not more than one-half mill on the dollar."[9]

Each district could vote for uniformity of textbooks in a county. If they did, the County Superintendent asked for one delegate from each township, and they comprised the County Textbook Board. They selected books and once they did so, the selections couldn't be changed for five years.

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[9]Ibid., pp. 6-9.

According to 1880's reminiscences of Mrs. Martha Bayne, a teacher in rural Russell, Lincoln and Osborne counties, Russell County, District No. 18, Prospect School, was a small stone house that had been deserted. The "blackboard was made of two pine boards, five feet long, one wide, with one side neatly dressed..." "No maps, charts, or globes." Mrs. Bayne taught 10 years and only three schools had floors -- "Delhi, Osborne County," "Luray," and "District 61 (Superior) in Russell County." Generally the schools were sod with sod roofs.[10]

Rooks County was typical in that settlers arrived about 1880 and they built their first public building schools by 1884.[11] Schools continued to open all over western Kansas as the homesteaders and settlers continued to move west, until the recessions and depressions of the early twentieth century.

The earliest county schools of western Kansas were usually dugouts, sod buildings, or deserted homesteads. The dugouts were usually constructed underneath the edge of a small cliff, since the natural soil was used for a roof; the outside ground looked like any other ground. But this ground was warmer in the winter from the stoves in the school. The warm ground attracted animals. Once a snake fell through a dirt roof onto a stove and fried. The teacher said she thought she knew what

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[10]Martha Bayne, "Reminiscences of Mrs. Martha Bayne, a Teacher in the Country Schools of Russell, Lincoln, and Osborne Counties in the '80's" (Manuscript copy 35686 at Kansas State Historical Society), (One p.).

[11]Statement by Warren Macy, personal interview, January 29, 1981.

hell was like because she remembered seeing the snake fry.[12]

When something happened to a school building, school often met in the home of one of the pupils. In the 1930's District 37, Brownville, in Thomas County, was rebuilt after a fire. Pupils attended school in homes while the frame building was replaced with a consolidated brick building. The new brick school included several original school districts.[13]

The Antelope Valley School, later called Dermont, was moved on skids in the early years prior to 1914 so it would be closer to most of the students as enrollment changed.[14]

There is an interesting tale about a country school near Mullinville, Kansas. Two homesteads were about 3 miles apart so they built a school. At the meeting to organize the district, farmer A had some hired help. Farmer B just had himself and his wife. When they voted for a director and secretary, farmer A was elected director and his wife secretary. So they put the school right across the road from farmer A's homestead. At the next annual meeting farmer B had hired hands, so he and his wife were elected. They voted to move the school halfway between the two homesteads. But when it came time to move the school, farmer A's wife was out with a shot gun to keep the school close to her house. Someone got up behind her and got the gun. Then they proceeded to move the building.[15]

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[12]Statement by William Robinson, personal interview, December 19, 1980.

[13]Statement by Al Hively, personal interview, November 27, 1980.

[14]Statement by Elver Milburn, personal interview, December 3, 1980.

[15]Robinson, loc. cit.

Western Kansas schools were constructed of whatever material was available. Some of the first were made of sod or rock. In the Ellis County area, post rock was used. In southern Logan County, chalk rock was used. The rock and chalk schools often had two thicknesses of rock with an air space between them for walls.

In the Ellis County area many early buildings were made of post rocks from limestone. By pushing back a little dirt on top of a hill, then drilling holes and putting a wedge in the holes and two feathers, it caused the rock to crack when the temperature changed. Then the limestone could be sawed or chopped.

Sometimes farmers drilled holes in rock in the fall. These filled with water and froze, and then the rock could be broken apart. These large pieces of limestone used for construction made solid substantial buildings. These buildings and most other early country schools were built by many residents of the area. The building of a school was a real community affair.

Where wood was available wooden schools were built. However these often had chinks or holes in the sides where wind, rain, snow, dirt and much more would blow into the school. Logs were split and used for chairs. At first simply holes in the wall served as windows; then glass was put into these holes, making more modern windows.

The sod schools were constructed by use of a breaking plow that sliced out pieces of sod two inches to four inches thick and twelve inches to fourteen inches wide. Soft mud was used for mortar to construct sod schools. Sometimes the roof was made of lumber, but usually poles with brush over the top were used. The floors were generally dirt.

Some districts utilized abandoned sod houses or claims as school

buildings. Others built sturdy wood buildings, many of which were stuccoed later. Most of these schools originally had one room, usually with a pot bellied stove that burned coal, corn cobs, sunflowers, cow chips, wood or whatever else might be available. Later some schools got propane heaters, and some even put furnaces in their basements. Usually there were windows on two sides of the building, often three per side, but many variations were noted. Slate boards or boards painted black were usually put on the wall opposite the entry door. The teacher's desk was often on a raised platform in the front of the classroom. This area was also used as a stage. Many schools had wire across the front of the school where sheets were strung to serve as curtains for programs. In front of the teacher's desk there was often a recitation bench.

In the rear of the classroom near the door that in many early schools opened out, was a shelf for lunches that were often carried in syrup buckets or lard pails. The earliest schools usually had a water pail or crock with a common dipper. Later each child had his own tin cup. There were hooks or nails for coats or the coats were just put in a corner.

Early light was from kerosene or gas lamps. Rows of single, double or triple desks often nailed to the floor filled the room. The smaller desks to the front held the youngest students, and the older scholars sat to the back in larger seats.

Buildings faced all directions. Walls were often plastered and painted a light color. In some of the more wealthy districts, wainscotting was put up the wall about three feet. As floors were put into schools, they were usually pine tongue and groove flooring that was cleaned with a sweeping compound.

Decorations and teaching aids in most schools included a flag; a

globe; charts on how to do many different things; a map case; pictures of Washington, Lincoln, Longfellow and others; a bell; a clock; a piano; an organ; an unabridged dictionary; other reference books, as well as additional items when they could be purchased by the district.

Most schools were rectangles painted white, with wood shingle roofs. Some schools had bell towers, with large bells to help call the children to school. Because of the prairie fire threat in later years, every fall a fire guard was plowed on the west and north sides of a school. Usually a deep furrow lister was used.

Foundations consisted of sod, rock, concrete block, and later some poured concrete. Water was often hauled by the teacher or the pupils. Some later schools had wells with hand pumps. Cisterns were quite common. These often caught rain water from the top of the school that ran through a filter system. Some filters were clean and sanitary, while many others held dead birds, dirt or other debris.

School yards had little play equipment at first. Children were inventive and created many games. Then many districts purchased or made their own slides, merry-go-rounds, swings and teeter-totters.

Many of the country schools were located on the corner of two roads. Often a church or cemetery was also near a school. An important observation is that although most of the cemeteries had fences around them, few of the early school yards had any barriers between the school yard and the road. Fences were one of the recommendations the Health Department made in later years.

In later years the Kansas State Board of Health inspected every country school and certified it as to its health standards. Schools were examined and rated with regard to the following: site, building, water, waste disposal, heating and ventilation, lighting, classrooms,

washrooms and sanitary facilities, playgrounds, food handling and sanitation, safety, and health of school personnel.[16]

Very few schools had teacherages. More often teachers boarded with a particular family in the district, or in the early years boarded with all the families who sent children to school.

Some of the rural schools had barns to house the horses that teachers and their scholars rode to school. As Martha Bell stated in the early Thomas County, students and teachers went to school on horses, in spring wagons, or on sleighs.[17] In Cheyenne County in the 1920's children rode horses or walked to school.[18] Concord School in Ford County had a barn in the mid 1940's.[19]

Most schools had fuel sheds either attached to the school or as separate buildings. Ante rooms to help protect the schoolroom from the severe weather in western Kansas were usually added around the outside of the doors. Two outhouses were a necessity. Patriotism was stressed in the early schools. Every school had a flag pole that was used regularly.

Another typical rural school was Prairie Range School in western Kansas. It opened in October, 1888 with 19 pupils. It was an abandoned dirt dugout, with dirt walls and a dirt floor. The door was a cellar type and there was one window for light. No school equipment was available

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[16]The Kansas State Board of Health, The School Inspector's Vade Mecum (Topeka: The Kansas State Board of Health, 1958), pp. 1-52.

[17]Statement by Martha Bell, personal interview, November 10, 1980.

[18]Statement by Cecil Nelson, personal interview, November 27, 1980.

[19]Statement by Alice Carmen, personal interview, November 26, 1980.

nor could it be purchased.

"Gunny bags," a type of burlap, were hung over the dirt walls and old pieces of rug were put on the floor for children to sit on. Bright material was hung by the window to make it look better. The water jug with a common cup was put on a wooden box. A box with a shelf was made into a desk; the teacher's chair was homemade with a slanted board nailed on a box. There was a small Topsy stove left by the person who established the claim.

In the spring of 1889 the district purchased an "unfinished frame building" from a man who had hoped his site would be chosen county seat. The school secured desks and a blackboard. The walls weren't plastered, but that was not important.[20]

Decatur County eventually organized 110 school districts. In 1940 there were still seventy-six one-teacher country schools, plus schools with more teachers.

The first Normal School or Teachers' Institute was held in 1884.

District No. 60 was typical in that it was formed January 6, 1886, with the first school district meeting being held January 29, 1886. The boundaries changed over the history of the district. A one-room sod school was built in 1884 and run as a subscription school. Twenty pupils attended three months in the fall and three months in the spring. Subjects included "reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling and geography, with grammar, history and physiology added the second year." In 1886 athletics were started, mainly baseball.

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[20]India H. Simmons, "Deserted Dugout Used as Early School for Youth of the Early Southwest," Dodge City Daily Globe, No date (1929?), pp. 8-9.

A frame one-room school was built in 1886 to replace the sod school. In 1892 a well with a windmill was dug, that provided good drinking water. Thirty-eight pupils attended this school in 1887. It was the second largest school in the county. In 1892 a school library was started, with funds from box suppers.

By 1940 the school was an eight-month school, with one teacher and six pupils. It was grouped with other area schools for area activities. It was later consolidated.[21]

Decatur County School District Number 71 was started southeast of Clayton as the Butler School named after Amon Butler, an early settler. At first school was held in a primitive dugout and then in a sod house. Miss Flora Vessey was the teacher. It is particularly interesting that this school was called "Buzzards' Roost." Eventually the sod school was replaced by a frame school.[22]

Stevens County had a rich history of their country schools. Fairview started in the dugout home of Mrs. Conine in 1886 as the first subscription school. In 1887 a sod school was built and twelve weeks of school was conducted, for which the teacher was paid twenty-five dollars per month. Later a frame school was built. The school was disorganized July 1, 1966.

Waterford School in Stevens County had white gyp plaster walls and used crayon dipped in red and black ink so it could be seen on the wall. The Dermont School District Number 6, located in the northeast corner of Stevens County, was honored as the only school on the Santa Fe Trail.

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[21]Cornell, op. cit., p. 39.

[22]Cameron, op. cit., p. 83.

South Harmony School in Stevens County was organized in 1887 and served its district until 1941 when students were transported to Moscow. The school was disorganized in 1946.

Maple Leaf School District Number 43 was the first school designated a standard school in Stevens County. The standard requirements were as follows:

YARD AND OUTBUILDINGS

1. School grounds at least one acre and kept in good condition.
2. Good approaches to the house.
3. Trees and shrubs, where climatic conditions will permit.
4. Two well-kept, widely separated outhouses, with screened entrances.
5. Convenient fuel house properly located.
6. Well where possible.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE

1. House well-built, in good repair, and painted.
2. Good foundation, well lighted and giving sunshine. Light from at least two sides, left and rear.
3. Each room well ventilated. Adjustable window shades.
4. Suitable cloak-rooms for boys and girls.
5. Good blackboards (slate preferred) set about twenty-six inches from floor.
6. Heated by a room heater with ventilator properly placed or by a basement furnace which provides for proper ventilation.
7. Floor and interior clean and tidy.

FURNISHINGS AND SUPPLIES

1. Desks suitable for children of all ages, and properly placed.
2. Good teacher's desk and chair.
3. Satisfactory bookcase and good collection of juvenile books suitable as aids to school work as well as general reading. Primary reading chart.
4. Set of good maps, a globe and a dictionary.
5. Sanitary water supply provided by the district board, sweeping preparation and thermometer.
6. Sand table.
7. Standard flag, properly displayed.

THE ORGANIZATION

1. School organized.
2. Classification and daily register well kept.
3. Definite daily program.
4. Attendance regular and punctual.
5. Discipline good.

THE TEACHER

1. Must hold a state certificate, a first-grade county certificate, a normal-training certificate, or must at least hold a second-grade certificate and must be a graduate of a four-year high school.
2. Must receive at least the average salary of the county and in no case less than sixty dollars a month.
3. Must be ranked by the county superintendent as a good or superior teacher.
4. Must read Teacher's Reading Circle books, attend institutes and associations and in other respects show a proper professional spirit.[23]

The souvenir Maple Leaf School gave their students was typical of those given by most rural schools.

MAPLE LEAF SCHOOL
District No. 43
Voorhees Township,
Stevens County, Kansas

SADIE B. WARREN, Teacher

PUPILS

Raymond Mosier
Delbert Thompson
Ruth Sharp
Lowell Stanley
Nettie Tubbs
Walter Elliott
Lillie Tubbs
Kenneth Sharp
Basil Elliott
Eugene Mosier
Jesse Tubbs

SCHOOL BOARD

J. W. Sharp A. B. Lynch
E. N. Stanley

[23]Stevens County History Association, The History of Stevens County and Its People (Houghton, Kansas: Lowell Press, Inc., 1979) pp. 316-351.

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In 1939 there were forty-three country schools in Barber County. Two were built in 1874 and the others in following years. Schools consisted of everything from abandoned homes to well built rock buildings to soddies. The majority were frame, even though lumber was hard to get. A sample was that District 8 hauled lumber one hundred twenty miles by team from Wichita. The quality of the frame schools varied. Some were so poorly constructed their walls moved with the wind.

District 16 was one of the first two schools built. T. A. Lindley, a sheep herder who taught school built a log school at District 16. District 10 was also started in 1874 in a dugout. Miss Abbie Lockwood was the teacher.

Most early schools were dirt floors and scantly furnished. Some schools didn't have heat and held school only in the mild weather.

The Julian School, District 24, was formed August 13, 1885, and disorganized July 1, 1966. The July 22, 1885 school census showed one hundred fifty-four possible students. From 1886-1899 average yearly expense of the Julian School was $213, school value was $195, with 10 students. The average salary for male teachers was $28.57 for 3.7 months. From 1900-10 the average cost of school operation was $201. Average attendance was six. The average male salary was $44 per month for a five-month term. The average female salary was $37 per month for a five-month term. From 1911-20 the average cost of school per year was $377. The average attendance was nine.

District 24, Sexton School, was organized February 7, 1879; a school was built on the southeast quarter of Section 16, Township 33, Range 14, in the southern part of the district. Enrollment was nearly twenty-five when the district was large. About 1895 the school was

moved four miles north to put it more in the center of the district. It was damaged and school was held for a year and a half in the private residence of John T. McGrath.

Mrs. Grace White taught at Julian School the last term 1962-63 for $400 per month for eight months. She held a B. S. degree. The last year there were only seven students, one family moved and then there were only four students left. The school was modernized with restrooms, a good size classroom, an equipped kitchen. The girls cooked lunch. The basement and a twenty-seven foot trailer served as a teacherage, giving Mrs. White and her son a place to live. Julian School was six miles from its mailbox. It was certainly isolated.[24]

Ford County had sixty-four school districts in 1950. Thirteen were intact and twelve were operating. It is interesting that prior to 1950 the Lutz School was purchased by area residents and used as a community center. Seven old schools were moved to Dodge to be made into homes. One school was made into a church.[25] Deserted school buildings throughout western Kansas were often used as garages, barns, storage, community centers. Some were taken apart for salvage. Unfortunately many have just been left to deteriorate.

Several schools reported activities other than school that were significant. One particularly interesting incident happened in Norton County. On many Friday nights in 1931 the school Denzel Lofgren attended

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[24]Grace White, "History of Rural Schools in Barber County, Kansas, Especially Julian," (Paper for Topics in Southwest Kansas History, University of Kansas, 1971), pp. 1-10.

[25]"It's Worth Repeating, Passing of the Rural Schools," High Plains Journal, (March 2, 1950), Section 2, p. 2.

was used for poker games. The teacher often came early on Monday morning to clean up. Men came from a distance to use the building. After Christmas vacation in 1931, the teacher and her pupils arrived at school on a Monday morning and found evidence that something more serious had happened. Blood and coins were on the floor and led the boys of the school to a dead body outside near an outhouse. It was a man from Wellington, Kansas, who was picking corn in the Norton area. His head had been mashed in by a sledge hammer. Denzel Lofgren saw the body. He was only six years old and seeing the dead man made a lasting impression on him. He said it was some time before any of the pupils would go to the outhouses alone. From this experience, the school got its name -- Dead Man's School.[26]

Denzel Lofgren also reported that four generations of his family attended Dead Man's School in Norton County, Kansas.[27] Other families also reported several generations attending the same school. Three generations of one family attended the North Star School in Graham County. They were Annabel Shane Wing, Ruth Wing Jamison, and three of Ruth's children.[28] The loyalty to the memory of the schools these families attended was extremely evident in the interviews with the families.

The number of historic country schools that can be located in each county in western Kansas certainly varies. The author of this paper did

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[26]Statement by Denzel Lofgren, personal interview, October 24, 1980.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Statement by Ruth Wing Jamison, personal interview, October 25, 1980.

attempt to locate all the remaining schools in a number of western Kansas counties. The number of remaining buildings certainly varies. Ellis County has fourteen sites that were identified with historic site forms, while Greeley County only had one, Mount Hope, District number 22, that could be located. Only one public school that has one room is still being used as an attendance center, Dermont, in Morton County. In all, ninety-eight historic site forms were completed on schools in the western part of Kansas.

Country schools have been preserved in many parts of western Kansas. Barton County has a historical village that includes a school that is furnished somewhat as it was in the early 1900's. The Kirwin Historical Committee has preserved the Joint District No. 1 school that served Phillips and Smith counties for 43 years. It is one-half block north of city square in Kirwin. The Santa Fe Trail Center has Pawnee County District Number 55, L'Dora School. Beloit has preserved the Honey Creek School, District No. 21. It is located north of Beloit on U. S. 24. They hold school there for half-day sessions to show today's youth the education process of yesterday. The three R's curriculum is emphasized and authentic subjects are studied. Mrs. Helen C. Babb, Box 419, Beloit, Kansas 67420, is the contact person to schedule the school.

Probably one of the most well known western Kansas schools is the Iowa School, District Number 83, that was originally in Mitchell County. It was purchased by Knott's Berry Farm in California in 1950 and moved to the Ghost Town section of the Farm. The 18 x 24 foot frame building constructed in 1879 sold for $253.50. The price included furnishings such as books, a stove, maps, a teacher's deck, students' desks, a flag pole, a swing and a ferris wheel. Iowa School was used as an attendance

center until the spring of 1947. Lillian Wiser was the last teacher.[29]

Another very well known school in western Kansas is Plymouth School. It was originally in Russell County and is now on the Fort Hays State University campus. This stone school with double walls was moved and reconstructed with great care that everything be done authentically. It cost about $25,000 to dismantle and reconstruct the building; this included a great deal of donated labor and material. Without the donations the cost would have been well over $50,000.

The school has been renovated to be as much like it was originally as possible. In the center of the room is a pot-bellied stove; the teacher's desk is on a platform raised slightly above the floor the desks are on. The front wall holds a slate blackboard (as most schools had, but Plymouth didn't; it was added to make Plymouth similar to other schools), a map case, and pictures of Lincoln and Washington. A Webster's Unabridged Dictionary sits on the teacher's desk, along with a hand bell. The library was very basic. Around 1900 it included a Bible, hymn book, almanac, dictionary and a few old schoolbooks. Textbooks used depend upon what each family has available. Coats and lunches were hung on hooks in the back of the room. Water was available in a bucket with a dipper on a window sill. The floor was made of southern yellow pine. A coal shed was attached to a corner of the building. Originally two outhouses, a flagpole and a playground completed the school.

The history and heritage of the country school is certainly important. As Dale Wing, District Sanitarian since 1960, said, country

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[29]"New Career For Old School House," Beloit Call, (May 23, 1950), n. p.

schools were the center of their rural communities, and the close family ties they helped cement continued to support the local rural school. People in western Kansas were more independent because they were further apart than those in eastern Kansas.[30]

The importance of history in Graham County is evident by the fact that the Graham County Historical Society has organized tours of parts of their county. They visited and heard brief histories of schools, churches, cemeteries, and many other places of historical value in all different parts of their county. In the process of doing this, they put up signs with the names and district numbers of each school on each building that was still standing in the county.

Thus country schools played one of the most significant roles in the settlement of the American frontier. The heritage these early schools left settlers was the quest for a better life through the opportunities of a free public education to all children.

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[30]Statement by Dale Wing, personal interview, November 13, 1980.

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COUNTRY SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY CENTERS

The center of activity in early western Kansas was certainly the country school. It was the site of almost every type of gathering.

Ford County had fifty literary societies all functioning and presenting regular programs at one time. Programs included: "music, readings, dialogues, and a lively debate on some current question."[1]

Blue Bell School, five miles south and three miles east of Dodge City, and Richland Valley School have been having community meetings since 1904. They had a community potluck at the school on December 5, 1980. The "Non Partisan League" sponsored programs there. Then after 1925 the Farm Bureau and the extension service sponsored a number of meetings there. Blue Bell Literary Society was very important. They often had formal debates or discussions and Sunday School there. Frank Anderson of Dodge City said "Heinie Schmidt of Dodge City attended the meetings quite often and he always sang. Joe Hulpiew came out from Dodge City too and gave some mighty fine readings." They also had minstrel shows. 4-H clubs met at school for 23 years. Discussions about graveling the roads and about problems of the farmers of the nation were held at the school.[2]

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[1]Heinie Schmidt, "It's Worth Repeating, Passing of the Rural Schools," High Plains Journal, February 12, 1950, Section II, p. 10.

[2]Community Meeting Is Old Rural Custom," High Plains Journal, December 2, 1954, p. 1, 8.

In Stevens County the South Harmony School was the site of Sunday School and Church every Sunday for many years after it was organized in 1887. This school hosted Christmas programs, where tree limbs were covered with cotton, strung popcorn and cranberries, tinsel and candles. The candles were lit for the program, with a man on each side with a bucket of water for potential fires. This school was also the site of spelling bees and literary. (See the following Harmony Literary Society Program.)

HARMONY LITERARY SOCIETY

February 17, 1905

Music--John Hirn
Declamation--Clarence Hedrick
Recitation--Millie Gerrond
Recitation--Lucy Gray
Stump Speech--Roy May
Declamation--Sam Homedew
Song--Margaret and Mamie Lahey
Recitation--Mabel Miller
Declamation--Norman Mason
Select Reading--Florence Carpenter
Recitation--Ruby Brollier
Recitation--Inez May
Recitation--Mary Burns
Song--Jim Brollier
Stump Speech--E. T. Hogan
Declamation--Victor Miller
Recitation--Grace May
Song--Ola Groff
Recitation--Lizzie Gray
Declamation--Vern Brollier
Recitation--Ethel Wengel
Declamation--Charlie Davis
Recitation--Bird May
Dialogue, Two of a Kind--Mary Burns, Vern Brollier and Mabel Miller
Question for Debate: Resolved that women should have the right of suffrage: Affirmative--Ernest Hogan, Mary Burns, Florence Carpenter, E. E. Hedrick and Charlie Carpenter, Negative--John Hirn, Marcus Gray, W. M. Miller, Dick Brollier and John Gray

The evening was enjoyed by the entire community.
Mary Burns, Secretary

Debates such as: "Which is the most useful, the Dishrag or the Broom?" were also held.[3]

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[3]Stevens County History Association. The History of Stevens County and Its People (1st ed.; Houghton, Kansas: Lowell Press, Inc., 1979, pp. 335-40.

According to John Eastepp who taught in a Kansas school: "During the pretty weather, about once every two weeks, some parents of the students would arrive about one hour before we regularly turned out school and we (the students and parents plus myself) would choose sides and play basketball. We played hard when we played, and worked hard in the classroom. The days were enjoyable. I then took part of the students home after school. When I arrived home each day, I did a lot of studying and getting future lessons prepared for the next day. I was usually up until 11:00 or 12:00 most every night."[4]

Country schools in Ness County were used in a variety of ways. Sunday school was held in many schools with church conducted in those schools that could attract a preacher from a nearby church. Literaries were given in a number of the schools. These consisted of programs of all sorts. Often the programs included readings from established authors or the school readers, such as McGuffies or others. Debates of current topics or items such as who was the greatest man were often held. These programs were given by the school pupils, but often the parents and other adults of the community also participated. Ness County schools also had box suppers, cake walks, spelling bees, card parties, polling places, pie suppers, dramatizations, special programs, community get-togethers, last day picnics, sports events and much more. These activities in Ness County are typical of country schools all over western Kansas. Pleasant Valley, District Number 3 of Ness County even had a baseball team that was noted for winning many of its games.[5]

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[4]Based on correspondence from John Eastepp, March 14, 1981.

[5]Mary Lou Hall, The History of Readin' Ritin' n 'Rithmetic (n.p., 1980), pp. 20-21.

Martha Bell reported that Prairie Bell School in Thomas County had telephone meetings when the farmers set up a private phone company.[6]

Generally programs were presented for many years in the country schools; however in the Thomas and Rawlins County area where Mary Bundy taught, lyceums stopped because of fiery tempers.[7]

In Graham County, North Star School hosted literary society every other Friday night. Activities included box suppers, spelling bees, ciphering matches, Christmas programs, debates and other types of school programs.[8]

Martha Bayne said literary societies were active in Russell, Lincoln and Osborne Counties in the 1880's.[9] According to Edna Bell, many schools such as Sawlog, located fourteen miles northeast of Dodge City, hosted literaries on Friday nights throughout the winter. Adults and children presented programs.[10]

The presentation of literaries helped students gain confidence in speaking before an audience. The schools particularly noted for hosting quality literary programs in Sheridan County were McGraw, Old Sheridan, and Rising Sun.[11]

Frontier School, District Number 27, in Cheyenne County, hosted literary about once a month. Parents and children all took parts in plays and many other types of entertainment in these early schools.[12] Social activities

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[6]Statement by Martha Bell, personal interview, November 11, 1980.

[7]Statement by Mary Bundy, personal interview, November 29, 1980.

[8]Statement by Ruth Wing Jamison, personal interview, October 25, 1980.

[9]Martha Bayne, Reminiscences of Mrs. Martha Bayne, a Teacher in the Country Schools of Russell, Lincoln, and Osborne Counties in the '80's (n.p.) (Kansas State Historical Society Mamuscript Copy 35686), one page.

[10]Statement by Edna Bell, personal interview, December 4, 1980.

[11]Statement by Warner Johnson, personal interview, January 3, 1981.

[12]Statement by Cecil Nelson, personal interview, November 27, 1980.

in Barber County schools included dances, church parties, spelling bees, and literaries.[13]

Prairie View School, six miles northwest of Dodge City, was called the "mother of literary societies."[14] One of the box suppers at Prairie View attracted a number of young people from Dodge City. These people put their money together and gave it to Harper Sitler to bid on the box belonging to the girlfriend of Arthur Pottorff. The bidding got to $10.50 and Pottorff let Sitler raise to $11.00 and have the box. It turned out not to be the box they wanted, and Pottorff got the box his girl made for $1.50.[15]

The $11.00 for a box supper was quite out of the ordinary. Normally in the early schools box suppers sold for 50¢ to 25¢. But it was not uncommon to raise enough money at one supper to purchase an encyclopedia set.[16]

Christmas programs were certainly events long awaited by the entire community. Even the decorating of the school was often a community event. In many early communities of western Kansas where trees were scarce, the only Christmas tree for an entire area might be put up at the school. The Sawlog School in Ford County had a Christmas tree that was cut by the men. Then the women would wrap it in cotton. They strung popcorn and cranberries to decorate the tree. Parents would bring a gift for each of their children and the entire community had a big Christmas party.[17]

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[13]Grace White, "History of Rural Schools in Barber County Kansas Especially Julian," (Paper for Topics in Southwest Kansas History, University of Kansas, 1971), p. 4.

[14]"It's worth Repeating, Passing of the Rural Schools," High Plains Journal, March 2, 1950, Sec. II, p. 2.

[15]Heinie Schmidt, "It's Worth Repeating, Passing of the Rural Schools," High Plains Journal, February 16, 1950, Sec. II, p. 6.

[16]Harold Hamil, "When Culture Flowered in the One-room School," Farmland, January 15, 1969, no page.

[17]Edna Bell, loc. cit.

Other schools celebrated Christmas in various ways. Often the school held a money making box supper or pie supper before Christmas and used the money to purchase candy for the scholars for Christmas. At Frontier School, District 27 in Cheyenne County, the students drew names and exchanged gifts that cost from 10¢ to 50¢. Most years they had a play including the nativity scene.[18]

Many teachers gave all their students candy or fruit at the community Christmas party. The important thing was that this holiday and many others were celebrated by most of the people in the area of the rural school together at the school. Entertainment varied. But, it is interesting to note that in 1950 Delbert Holub, a twelve-year-old, recited "The Night Before Christmas" to Mary Bundy's school and community.[19] Christmas programs were also noted at the Good Hope School in Ellis County.[20]

The rural schools were definitely the centers for all types of activities. Frontier School, District Number 27 in Cheyenne County, joined six other schools for athletic competition and other activities. All of these schools were about six miles apart and had about twenty-five pupils from first to eighth grade. The schools that regularly held joint activities were: North Star, South Star, Glendale, Center, Beaver, Pleasant Hill, and Frontier.[21]

Warren Macy started school in 1918 at Spring Branch School in Rooks County. His school and Union 4, just two miles west of Spring Branch, used

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[18]Nelson, loc. cit.

[19]Bundy, loc. cit.

[20]Based on personal correspondence between Esther Gatewood and the writer.

[21]Nelson, loc. cit.

to get together for "play activities."[22]

Some schools exchanged programs with other schools in their areas. Olive Branch School and Prairie Bell School, both in Thomas County, exchanged programs.[23]

Many schools were used as churches. The Graden School in Graham County was used for church. Political candidates debated in the schools. Schools were often used by travelers for overnight lodging. Sometimes travelers used up fuel needed to keep the school warm, but seldom did they steal things.

One often hears about the pranks in early country schools. One night before a play at the Brownville School in Thomas County, several boys made another boy climb a ladder to the top of the water tower that was thirty feet high and eighteen feet across. Then they removed the ladder and left the boy there. They forgot about him until the next morning. Al and the other boys who made the boy climb the ladder had to stay in for a week of recesses. Al's comment was "It might have been worth it."[24]

The last day of school was definitely a community time. Most schools held picnics for the entire community. Some had sports competition; some gave scholastic awards; some had programs, but almost all schools had an enjoyable community gathering on the last day of school.

Country schools are still often used as community centers. Some schools have been transformed into specific uses. One example is a rural school near

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[22]Statement by Warren Macy, personal interview, January 29, 1981.

[23]Statement by Vida Toburen, personal interview, November 29, 1980.

[24]Statement by Al Hively, personal interview, November 27, 1980.

Hanover, Kansas, which is now being used by area residents to print braille books.[25]

The country schools of western Kansas gave the rural people a focal point. They helped establish a sense of community for the rural residents. They helped the scattered settlers of their area work together in the settlement of western Kansas.

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[25]American Trail TV Program, July 28, 1981.

HISTORIC SITE FORMS COMPLETED ON WESTERN KANSAS

52 by other people
52 by Donna Jones
104 total to date 11-30-81

Cheyenne County	
District No. 17, Center or Central	Stan Dorsch
Clark County	
U2, Morrison School	Harland Hughes
District No. 87, Acres School	Raymond Lunsford
Comanche County	
Comanche County History Book -- includes schools	
Decatur County	
District No. 30, Cedar Bluffs	Donna Jones
District No. 72, Prairie Belle	Lora Arnold
Complete history of every school	Katie Cornell
Ellis County	
District No. 49, Vincent	Donna Jones
U-1	Donna Jones
District No. 24, Good Hope	Donna Jones
District No. 15, Stockrange	Donna Jones
District No. 17	Donna Jones
Cottonwood Grove	Donna Jones
District No. 43, Star	Donna Jones
District No. 45, Buckeye	Donna Jones
District No. 55, Pleasant Ridge	Donna Jones
District No. 9, Turkville	Donna Jones
District No. 20, Saline Valley	Donna Jones
District No. 35, Blue Hill	Donna Jones
District No. 37, Lost Canyon	Donna Jones
District No. 48	Donna Jones
Finney County	
District No. 10, Solid Rock	Donna Jones
District No. 5, Eminence	Donna Jones
District No. 35, Essex	Donna Jones
Harmony	Donna Jones
U-5	Mrs. Norma Jane Daniels
U-2, Friend	
District No. 45-7 (part of it) Pierceville-Plymell	Donna Jones
District No. 45-7, Jennie Barker	Donna Jones
District No. 45-7, Theoni	Donna Jones
Ford County	
District No. 22, later 82, Concord School	Alice Carmen
Blue Bell	Chalkboard
Gove County	
District No. 32, Union Orion School (Garland Township)	Rosalie Luck

Graham County	
District No. 45, North Star	Donna Jones
District No. 3, South Star	Donna Jones
Mt. Etna	Donna Jones
District No. 48, Goshen	Donna Jones
District No. 47, Brownville	Donna Jones
District No. 9, Whitfield	Donna Jones
District No. 64, Crocker	Donna Jones
District No. 32, Buchanan	Donna Jones
District No. 23, Mt. Vernon	Donna Jones
District No. 50, High Hill	Donna Jones
Grant County	
District No. 214, Red Rock 11 miles east of Ulysses -- still in use	Donna Jones
Greeley County	
District No. 22, Mt. Hope	Donna Jones
Haskell County	
District No. 14, Pleasant Valley	Donna Jones
Kiowa County	
None	
Logan County	
District No. 50 #2	
Little Eagle	Donna Jones
District No. 50 #1	
District No. North 50, Pleasant View -- on Highway 83, 24 miles north of Scott	Donna Jones
District No. 8	Donna Jones
Mitchell County	
District No. 62, Hyde	Jean Wesselowski
Morton County	
District No. 1, Taloga	Vita Scott Moore
District No. 4, Greenwood	Florena Minor
District No. 16, Dermont (now #23)	Donna Jones
District No. 12, Pleasant Plains	Linda Frownfelter Martin
District No. 14, Wild Rose	Raymond Moore
District No. 15, Prairie View	Twylah Fisher
District No. 18, East Cess	June Bane
District No. 19, New Zion	Margaret M. (Riley) Gillespie
District No. 20, Riverview	Bera Louise Evans Smith
District No. 19, New Zion	Ellen Riley Penick
District No. 9, West Cess	M. R. Coen
Ness County	
Hall Book -- The History of Readin Ritin 'n' Rithmetic in Ness County	

Norton County	
District No. 24, Big Timber	Ruth McMulkin
District No. 23, Dead Man School	Donna Jones
District No. 58, Excelsor	Eldon Wyatt
District No. 33, Kinderhook	Ernest Gramsow
District No. 70, Pickes Peak	Harold Fischi
District No. 10, Star	Mrs. Beth Bryant
District No. 105, Boker	Ruth Grose
District No. 90, Fairview	Ruth Grose
District No. 98, Aurora	Ines Lesh
District No. 6, Hillman	Donna Jones
Phillips County	
District No. 69, Willowdale	Stanley Nelson
District No. 97, Dayton Center	George Bach
Joint District No. 1 (Phillips & Smith Co.)	Marie Stockman
Pratt County	
District No. 81, Mt. Pleasant	Mrs. Harry B. Lunt
Rawlins County	
District No. 14, Achilles	Mrs. Ivy Yoos
District No. 12, Harmony	Mrs. Ivy Yoos
District No. 74, then 1946147 to 227 228,229 in 1946 Beaver View, Joseph, Binning School	Charlene Kramer
District No. 73, Little Beaver 1946 organized with Dist. 203 & 228	Charlene Kramer
District No. 28, in 1946 closed and changed to 227 & 228, Happy Hollow	Charlene Kramer
District No. 55, then 227 in 1946 Pleasant Hill, Pleasant Valley	Charlene Kramer
Rooks County	
District No. (southeast of Palco)	Albert Sparks
District No. 58, Spring Branch	Warren Macy
Brown	Donna Jones
Russell County	
District No. 4, Four Corners	Clara Kaps
4 miles east of Russell center of town and 3 miles south on Pioneer Road	Donna Jones
District No. 44, Pleasant Valley	Alice Heinze
Now on Hays campus, Plymouth	Fort Hays
Scott County	
Mulch School	Opel Rose
Sheridan County	
District No. 4, Rising Sun	Donna Jones
District No. 7, Chicago	Donna Jones
District No. 22, Prairie Flower	Donna Jones

Sheridan County (continued)	
District No. 25, Bee Hive	Donna Jones
District No. 55, Henry	Donna Jones
Sherman County	
Union 3, Garfield	Norma Walters
Stafford County	
District No. 50, Fairview	Glen McComb
Ardery	Velma Coen
Thomas County	
District No. 92, Olive Branch	Donna Jones
District No. 15, Nicol	Donna Jones
District No. 70, Abilene	Donna Jones
District No. 37, Brownville	Donna Jones
Trego County	
(south of Ellis)	Donna Jones
Wallace County	
District No. 44, Western Star to 1923, then No. 45 Morton Township	Raymond Estes
District No. 44 then 45, Western Star	Fern Estes
District No. 241, Wallace High School	Lavise Pearce

ORAL INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY DONNA JONES

1.	Frank Anderson	Finney County	12-4-80
2.	Edna Bell	Ford County	12-4-80
3.	Martha Bell	Thomas County	11-10-80
4.	Lydia S. Bishop	Western Kansas	10-24-80
5.	Mary Bundy	Rawlins County	11-29-80
6.	Alice Carmen	Ford County	11-26-80
7.	George Drew	Morton County	12-3-80
8.	Annalee Hampton	Greeley County	12-7-80
9.	Albert Hively	Thomas County	11-27-80
10.	Delores Hope	Finney County	12-2-80
11.	Ruby Lee Jacobs	Graham County	10-25-80
12.	Ruth Wing Jamison	Graham County	10-25-80
13.	Warner Johnson	Sheridan County	1-3-81 2 tapes
14.	David Jones	Thomas County (lives in Garden City)	1-11-81
15.	Eva Kirk	Sherman County	1-24-81
16.	Barbara Knoll	Ellis County	12-10-80
17.	Denzel R. Lofgreen	Norton	10-24-80
18.	Barbara Lowenthal	Finney County, Mead County, lives in Lawrence, interview in Colby	12-25-80
19.	Warren Macy	Rooks County	1-29-81
20.	Tom & Elver Milburn & Selora B. Lewis	Morton County	12-3-80
21.	Margaret McBride	Thomas County	11-29-80
22.	Cecil Nelson	Cheyenne County	12-19-80
23.	Merle Nevins	Logan County--Black School	2-25-81
24.	Leona W. Pfeifer	Ellis County	2-17-81
25.	Mary Robinson	Ford County	12-5-80
26.	William N. Robinson	Kansas	11-13-80
27.	Rose Ann Rupp	Ellis County	1-29-81
28.	Ruth A. Siegrist	Graham County	10-25-80
29.	Rosa L. Stokes	Graham County	12-17-80
30.	Vida Nelson Toburen	Thomas County	11-29-80
31.	Dale Wing	Northwest Kansas District Sanitarian	11-13-80

ORAL INTERVIEWS ON MORTON COUNTY
CONDUCTED BY JANICE SMITH, ELKHART, KANSAS

32.	Flo Minor	Morton County	12-2-80
33.	Doc Crawley	Morton County	11-25-80
34.	Fred Barnes Paul Weatherford Logan Holmes	Morton County	12-3-80
35.	Nell Walsh	Morton County	12-3-80

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TEACHERS: THEIR ROLES, RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

The Kansas country school teacher was and still is a dedicated, strong willed, responsible individual who believed that an education would help one toward a fuller, brighter life. Many teachers experienced a deep sense of satisfaction such as when Mable Eighmy Davis, an early rural teacher in Norton County, reflected on her teaching career. She said: "Did I find the pot of gold? I'm counting the pieces now -- my life's work and the love, loyalty and wealth of friends. More than all -- the peace with which God fills my heart."[1] She was certainly satisfied with her role in life.

Kansas was a leader in early education. In 1882 Kansas had 6,436 organized school districts with 357,920 pupils between five and twenty-one years of age. The average monthly salary of male teachers was $31.42 and $24.95 for female teachers. The valuation of school property was $4,381,740.00. Ellis County was a typical western Kansas county. In 1882 Ellis County had 39 organized districts, 2,623 school population, $44 per month male teachers' average salary, $26 per month female teachers' average salary, and $31,500 was the value of all school property.[2]

One of the noted early Kansas teachers, Lizzie Wooster, was born on her

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[1] E. M. Davis. A Kansas Schoolma'ma, 1898-1951 (Chicago: Adams Press, 1960), p. 153.

[2] Third Biennial Report of the State Board of Agriculture to the Legislature of the State of Kansas, for the years 1881-82. (Second ed.; Topeka: Kansas, 1883), p. 232 and 551.

father's homestead in rural Jewell County in 1870. At sixteen Lizzie took her first rural school for $33 a month. She didn't even have her high school diploma, which was common for the late 1800's. She was single for her entire life and spent many years as a teacher. The following two quotes are typical of her feelings: "Our first duty is to the children of the state. Although Kansas is rich in many resources and enterprises, the educational activities are more valuable than all others." Just as many other early teachers, Lizzie was quite a moralizer. She published the Wooster textbooks that were used for almost twenty years in the early 1900's. Her texts were good for the early student, but "more moralizing than would be popular today." She published arithmetics, spellers, and readers. She incorporated the following quote into her spellers -- "The young man who smokes cigarettes need not worry about his future. He has none."[3]

Lizzie went on to school and in 1914 became a lawyer. She later secured the position of state superintendent of instruction. She attained a number of positive goals, but overemphasized the moral overtones. Her fanatical attitudes resulted in public ridicule of her. Because of her actions and positions, vocational education was placed under a different control system than public education. This has been a lasting result of the actions of Lorraine Elizabeth Wooster. She was defeated in the next election. Her textbooks that were being published by her own company were not used as widely as before, and eventually she ended up living in poverty.

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[3]Lydia Mayfield, "Lizzie Wooster, She Kept Kansas Teachers on the Straight and Narrow Path...at Least She Tried To," Kanhistique VII (May, 1981), p. 7.

Preparation for teaching varied from those who completed eighth grade, went to normal training or those who attended and completed college, some of whom attended the state normal training school at Emporia. Early teachers took an oral test from the county superintendent; later they were required to pass the county exam to teach.

For example, Lydia Bishop attended one year at Fort Hays State University and earned a three-year certificate. Then she started to teach. She went back to school most summers; she secured a life certificate with 60 hours. She continued to take classes every year she taught and lacks eight hours of a degree.

The first year college course taught her the "course of study." It and the bimonthly exams were the "bible" she followed. But one of the big problems she encountered was there was no preparation for the first day of school or schedule for that day; however her husband who had attended country school helped her. She made her lesson plans around the bimonthly exams from the state.

Each fall the counties where she taught had institute for one or two weeks before school that was very helpful. She was also asked to read two professional books per year. She subscribed to the Teachers Magazine, the Normal Instructor and Grade Teacher. She said she used many ideas from these. Often she used a picture from one of her magazines for opening exercises.[4]

Warren Macy started teaching in 1930 at District 49 in Rooks County. He had attended Woodston High School for four years, gone to Fort Hays for one month and taken an exam for his state certificate. He started teaching

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[4]Statement by Lydia Bishop, personal interview, October 24, 1980.

with "one qualification, that was the desire to succeed."[5]

Vida Toburen started teaching in 1930 when she was only 17 years old. She had a Normal Training Certificate from Colby High School. She later went to college and worked toward a degree. Mrs. Toburen had 16 students the first year she taught in all grades except sixth. She said she needed to know more about methods. But she was sure she learned more than all sixteen put together the first year she taught.[6]

The rural teachers in western Kansas certainly took on responsible positions when they sought situations. First of all to apply for a position a perspective teacher usually had to go to the farms of each school board member to discuss a job. Often the walk or horse and buggy ride had to be repeated in order to find the school board members at home.

Once a job was secured, the teacher took on a number of tasks in addition to planning the lessons and teaching. She or he chopped wood, carried wood or coal, cleaned the school, cleaned the outhouse, opened and closed the school each day, took care of any emergency that happened, supervised and often played during recess, carried water, started the fire, served as the counselor, sometimes ran a bus, and anything else that needed to be done. The extent the students helped with tasks varied from one district to another.

Early teachers usually boarded in a number of homes; later teachers often boarded with one of the families who had room for an extra person. Some schools provided teacherages for the teacher. For example, Taloga School District Number One, in Morton County, located twelve miles north

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[5]Statement by Warren Macy, personal interview, January 29, 1981.

[6]Statement by Vida Toburen, personal interview, November 29, 1980.

and three miles west of Elkhart, had two rooms in the basement for the teacher to use as a residence.

Early salaries varied, with a range from $8.00 to $30.00 per month for teachers who taught an average term of four months in 1863.[7] Martha Bayne who taught in Russell, Lincoln, and Osborne counties in the 1880's received an average salary of $20 per month for a three-month term.[8]

Often salaries were negotiated individually by a teacher with their board members. For example Annalee Hampton secured a teaching position in Greeley County in 1930 and forgot to ask the salary. She asked one of the board members and was told she would receive the same salary as the teacher the year before, $100.00 per month. Later from another board member she was told they had paid her too much, because new teachers didn't usually receive $100.00 per month. The teacher the previous year had been experienced. But as Mrs. Hampton said, she earned every bit of it.[9]

Many schools changed teachers regularly. Olga Guise, with a second grade certificate, was the earliest recorded teacher, in 1886, for a twelve-week term at the Otterbourne School District Number 2, in Thomas County. Her salary was $20 per month. Other Thomas County schools and salaries were Cumberland, District Number 3, where school terms were from three months to nine months and monthly salaries from $25.00 in 1886 to $100.00 in 1931, and Center View, District Number 6, gave monthly salaries from $25.00 to $175.00.[10]

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[7] F. L. Pinet, "Seventy-Five Years of Education in Kansas" (Address at Kansas State Teachers' Association at Topeka, November 4-5, 1938), (Manuscript).

[8] Martha Bayne, Reminiscences of Mrs. Martha Bayne, a Teacher in the Country Schools of Russell, Lincoln and Osborne Counties in the 80's, (n.p.) (Kansas State Historical Society Manuscript Copy 35686), one page.

[9] Statement by Annalee Hampton, personal interview, December 7, 1980.

[10] See School District Files, Thomas County Historical Society, Colby, Kansas.

Country teachers certainly exhibited spirit and dedication. In the 1920's, Barbara Knoll taught at Lost Canyon School about twenty miles north of Victoria, Kansas. She had a boy in fourth or fifth grade who stuttered when he started reading to the class. The other pupils laughed at him. The teacher asked why the class laughed and they said they had done it the year before. The teacher asked the class not to laugh and put themselves in the place of the boy who stuttered. The boy is now a man and talks normally.[11]

Teacher interest in their students was certainly evident by the way teachers spent recess. During the lunch recess at the Dewey School in Rawlins County, Kansas, teacher Margaret McBride took her students on walks to find fossils, went fishing, went on nature walks, ate lunch on the rocks and many other educational activities.[12]

Alice Wolfred (now Mrs. Harold Jordan, Beloit) taught several years at Spring Branch School in Rooks County. She kept her students, among them Warren Macy, "profitably busy." Miss Wolfred inspired Mr. Macy to go into public school work. She kept the students interested by a variety of activities, such as tacky day parties, picnics, and twice a day poetry. She was genuinely interested in her students.[13]

Later when Warren Macy was teaching, he had a little boy who had quit first grade because he didn't like school and didn't want to go back. So Johnny and his father went to school in a wagon and the man called the teacher to his wagon and told Mr. Macy to take the kicking, screaming boy to school. Mr. Macy did; Johnny settled down and found some friends. He

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[11]Statement by Barbara Knoll, personal interview, December 10, 1980.

[12]Statement by Margaret McBride, personal interview, November 29, 1980.

[13]Macy, loc. cit.

become a successful man in later life.[14]

Al Hively noted that his teachers were "just one of us." This was a very common feeling among the thirty two people I interviewed about their country school experiences. Teachers participated and often organized box suppers, literaries and other types of community activities.[15]

When Al Hively was in the second grade he had a four inch firecracker blow up in his face and he was in the hospital in Colby for some time. Then he was in a dark room for almost a year. His teacher brought his lessons to him twice a week in his soddie home. Al's father paid the teacher a little extra to come to their home in order for Al to keep up his lessons. It was eleven months before Al saw light. His teacher certainly helped make the time pass faster.

Teachers often worked to provide the extra inducement for students. One of the teachers at Dead Man's School in Norton County was Lester Applegate. He gave the students a little broader education. He included a little electricity and things like that in the curriculum.[16]

Mary Bundy told her students she was their friend as well as their teacher and that she loved each student. She felt responsible for all her students and worked to teach them physically, mentally and philosophically. She was an excellent example of the dedication and commitment teachers often put into their jobs.

Teachers worked hard getting lessons for many grades. For example John Eastepp, a rural teacher, said: "I did a lot of studying and getting future lessons prepared for the next day. I was usually up until 11:00 or

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Statement by Al Hively, personal interview, November 27, 1980.

[16] Statement by Denzel Lofgren, personal interview, October 24, 1980.

12:00 most every night."[17]

One of the keys to success was the rural teacher attitude Vida Toburen exhibited when she said "Nothing is too simple to tell a child."[18] Country school teachers could not be experts at everything but many tried to learn how to teach even what they didn't know. Mable Eighmy Davis took art lessons for a year and could only draw a sunflower. But her pupils won first place in the county art exhibit.[19]

Teachers earned reputations for their abilities. Minnie Peterson started teaching at fifteen in 1903 in rural Phillips County at Young School. Years later after teaching in various places and having a family, Mrs. Peterson was asked by a former student to teach in school district number 11, in the southeast part of Logan County. The school had thirty students, many of whom were discipline problems. Mrs. Peterson managed the discipline problems well and the year of school went as was expected. She lived in the back of the Holiness Church parsonage during the week and went home to her family only on weekends.[20]

Some young people started teaching because they found themselves in positions such as that of Irene Henderson Kelley. At seventeen, after her sophomore year in high school, her mother died, and her father moved to Colorado. Irene was left with two younger sisters and an eight-year-old brother to care for. So Irene went to Normal School the summer after her father left and earned a certificate to teach. Bliss School hired her for

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[17]Based on correspondence from John Eastepp, March 14, 1981.

[18]Toburen, loc. cit.

[19]Davis, loc. cit.

[20]John M. Peterson, "I'm Going to Be a Teacher," Kanhistique, V (June, 1979), pp. 12-13.

six months for $45 per month. She had to board away from home during the week, but through hard work she was able to help her brothers and sisters.[21]

The transportation early teachers used was often walking or use of a horse. Edna Bell rode a horse five miles to teach the first year she taught.[22] Mary Bundy rode a horse sixteen miles per day to teach at district 56 in Rawlins County. She particularly remembered her frozen dinner from her long rides.[23] Denzel Lofgren remembered that his teacher Beth Page walked about half a mile from her family home where she boarded.[24] In 1948 Lydia Bishop told a school board who asked her to teach that she would if she could "fly" to school. So the school board arranged for her to "fly," as best they could by securing a Model A Ford car that picked up the teacher and other students and took them to school and then went on another route and picked up other students. They called this car a school bus, because that was how it was used.[25]

Once the teachers and students arrived at the rural Kansas schools they were often able to go on field trips and participate in many unique teaching experiences. Rural teachers used their imaginations in order to keep the interest of students. For example, Martha Bell took her students to an Indian site west of the school on a hill and searched for artifacts. This made their study of Indians and the West come to life. There was also a

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[21]Ruth Kelley Hayden, The Time That Was (Colby, Kansas: H. F. Davis Memorial Library, 1973), pp. 106-8.

[22]Statement by Edna Bell, personal interview, December 4, 1980.

[23]Statement by Mary Bundy, personal interview, November 29, 1980.

[24]Lofgren, loc. cit.

[25]Bishop, loc. cit.

bachelor who lived near the school who owned a number of antiques. The students used to go to his home during the noon recess, before and after school. Often horses were taken to his home for water. One very interesting item he shared with the students and teacher was his Edison phonograph.[26]

Lydia Bishop also took her classes on walks. They made charts, drew signs of the seasons, and watched farmers in their work and discussed what was being done. One year a class made a small sod house on the school lot. Mrs. Bishop was always looking for ways to keep students interested. One method she used was teaching students to square dance.[27]

One of the special activities Alice Carmen remembered was making books about the state birds. The students colored the birds and tied the pages together. She also remembered making books on Australia and Switzerland. Alice attended Concord School, thirteen miles from Dodge City. The students from her school had the opportunity to go to Dodge City and visit Boot Hill, a chicken packing plant and a newspaper office. They even went to Garden City to see a sugar beet factory.[28]

Mary Bundy worked with her students to keep their enthusiasm for learning high. She helped her students make barometers in science class. The girls wove mats and the boys made bird houses. She worked with her students on singing for the All School Days in the county seat Atwood, and her students often earned blue ribbons for singing "Over the Rainbow" and "Mocking Bird Hill." She tried whenever possible to take her students to visit other schools. Her Beardsley School often went to visit other schools for spelling

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[26]Statement by Martha Bell, personal interview, November 10, 1980.

[27]Bishop, loc. cit.

[28]Statement by Alice Carmen, personal interview, November 26, 1980.

bees, ciphering matches and games.[29]

Most country teachers used their imagination to invent teaching aids. There were a few to help most teachers -- maps, globes, flip charts, dictionaries, sometimes a small library. Lydia Bishop's situation was typical in that she only had phonics cards and a few books she could check out from the county superintendent. But to get the books she had to go to the county seat and pick them up, so she was not able to do that often. She did work to develop a personal collection of items to help her teach, such as during the first year she taught she bought the primary volumes of Classroom Teacher.[30]

The county superintendent was often a help to the rural teachers. Some superintendents helped new teachers with lesson plans, some provided teaching material to all county schools, while others spent most of their time on visits to the schools and administrative duties. But generally this person served as a much needed consultant for rural teachers.

Edna Bell was the Ford County Superintendent of Schools from 1921 to 1939. She visited each of the seventy county schools for an hour or more. These visits certainly entailed a great deal of rough travel. Mrs. Bell maintained a library to which she added about ten books per year. This was available to the entire county, but teachers usually had to go to town to get their materials so they were not really accessible to most rural teachers. Mrs. Bell's office did mimeograph materials for the primary grades. These study sheets were usually designed by the county superintendent.

One day when Mrs. Bell was visiting rural schools in the northeast

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[29] Bundy, loc. cit.

[30] Bishop, loc. cit.

part of Ford County she drove up to a school and saw a ladder up to a window. She saw the teacher ringing the bell and the children started up the ladder. It seems the teacher had forgotten her key, so the teacher and Mrs. Bell proceeded up the ladder into the school, and classes were conducted as usual.[31]

Teachers not only had cooperation from county superintendents, they usually had strong support and involvement on the part of the parents. Teachers were frequent guests for meals in the homes of students. The channels for communication were definitely open. This also helped contribute to the fact that pupils were usually ready to help the teacher by working with other students or in whatever way that was necessary.

Some teachers had their own children or relatives in class. Lydia Bishop taught her child three years, in the first, second and third grades.[32] When Alice Carmen was in first grade Mrs. Hurd, the teacher, also had her daughter in school.[33] When Annalee Hampton attended country school she had each of her brothers as teachers at different times. Generally there seem to have been few problems when these people had relatives as teachers.

The rural teacher was often isolated in her school, miles from a farm or another adult. Whatever type of emergency came along had to be dealt with in the best manner the teacher could decide upon. Lydia Bishop said she had many visitors at school, most of whom were book salesmen or playground equipment salesmen. One night after school a salesman tried to take

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[31]Edna Bell, loc. cit.

[32]Bishop, loc. cit.

[33]Carmen, loc. cit.

advantage of her in the school building. If she hadn't had an ax handy she is not sure what might have happened.[34]

Country school teachers obviously operated alone most of the time. There was no organized substitute system. Usually if a teacher had to miss school a parent substituted. This points toward one of the worst drawbacks of country schools that country teachers didn't have contact with other teachers during the day. They also frequently lacked education in dealing with the special child who was gifted or slow.

Social life of the teacher was limited. It was often limited to only those activities acceptable to the community. However, many teachers did attend shows, dances, church functions and do other community activities.

Mary Bundy also had a problem with a salesman. One day as she was conducting school, a man came to her school and said he was selling books and he wanted her to purchase at least four. She told him he needed to see the school board, because they made all such purchases. The salesman proceeded to step back and threw a wasps nest into the school and turned the teacher's horse loose. Many of the children were stung by the wasps, and Mary had to tend their stings and then sent them home at the regular time because parents wouldn't expect them earlier. She then had to walk home, which made it well after 8:00 p.m. when she arrived.[35]

Prairie fire was always one of the fears of teachers. In 1912 Catherine Walz, a teacher at Prairie Fire School District in Sheridan County, was at the home where she boarded. It was a couple of days after school closed for the summer. Catherine was there alone with the eighty-five-year-

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[34]Bishop, loc. cit.

[35]Bundy, loc. cit.

old lady of the house. The line ring came over the phone and it was reported that there was a fire three and a half miles southeast of Hoxie headed toward Catherine. She prepared the farm as best she could for the fire. She put the livestock in the barn, filled everything with water and was able to save herself and the elderly lady and the house. However the animals got out of the barn and were killed and the barn was burned.[36] This threat of fire is the reason many teachers and boards plowed fire guards around schools in the early years. The fire guard became a health department requirement in later years.

Students at Buzzard's Roost School District 71 in Decatur County just outside Clayton were unruly sometimes. One teacher was tied to the fence all day. This and other treatment led to her resignation. Mr. John Wilsey resigned due to the "tough element." Rural students developed muscles early with their hard work and sometimes this led to mischievous ideas. Teachers had to have the ability to keep kids in line and have their ideas followed.[37] Many teachers had pranks they dealt with. Students often plugged a chimney and filled the school with smoke in order to gain a recess. Teachers found snakes, spiders, rats and other animals in their desks. It was definitely a potentially harmful situation when shotgun shells were put into a heating stove.

Salaries varied for teachers. Eva Kirk who taught at Maplegrove School in Sherman County in 1914-15 was paid $55.00 a month to teach twenty-five students.[38] Martha Bell taught in 1928 for $75.00 a month, of which she

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[36]Statement by Warner Johnson, personal interview, January 3, 1981.

[37]Roderick Cameron, Pioneer Days in Kansas, A Homesteader's Narrative of Early Settlement and Farm Development on the High Plains Country of Northwest Kansas (Belleville, Kansas: Cameron Book Company, 1951), p. 85.

[38]Statement by Eva Kirk, personal interview, January 24, 1981.

spent $24.00 per month on board and room.[39] Warren Macy started teaching when he was eighteen in 1930 for $80.00 per month for an eight-month term. Then in 1932-33 as the economy dropped, he was only paid $50.00 per month.[40] Also in 1930 Lydia Bishop was paid $90.00 per month to teach ten students on the edge of Barton County. By 1948 Mrs. Bishop was paid $175 per month, plus transportation for teaching.[41] Annalee Hampton was paid $100.00 per month in 1930.[42] With regard to salaries one student, Ruth Wing Jamison, had a unique view. She felt she should be paid, because the teacher was paid and in this student's opinion she worked harder than the teacher.[43]

The rules teachers abided by were often limiting.

RULES FOR TEACHERS
1872

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.

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[39]Martha Bell, loc. cit.

[40]Macy, loc. cit.

[41]Bishop, loc. cit.

[42]Hampton, loc. cit.

[43]Statement by Ruth Wing Jamison, personal interview, October 25, 1980.

7. Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.[44]

In addition to these rules teachers were expected to be the example for the community, for after all, they had the education that most early settlers respected so reverently. In the early years women teachers were not expected to marry because it was felt that one income should support a family and if a teacher chose to marry she usually gave up her position. Use of cosmetics was discouraged.

Some of the restrictions on teachers were reasons that some people left teaching or didn't enter the profession.

In 1951 the Kansas State Teachers' Association was concerned about a "shortage of teachers with certificates who would teach for salaries offered by one-teacher or small schools." So the High Plains Journal did a survey of eighteen southwest Kansas counties. They found that rural schools were not short of teachers and that the education process was going well.

Morton County was the only county that reported a teacher shortage in the 1951 survey. It was at Richfield and that school had a modern teacherage and an appropriate salary.

Seward County had three qualified teachers who didn't have positions.

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[44] Rules for Teachers, 1872. (Dodge City, Kansas: Cultural Heritage Center, n.d.), one page.

Gray County had consolidated prior to 1951, except for one country school south of Ensign. They had no problems securing teachers.[45]

In recent years recognition of the value of teachers in Kansas has increased. The Kansas Teachers' Hall of Fame was chartered in 1977. Its purpose is to "select, recognize, and honor outstanding teachers, grades kindergarten through 12 and Area Vocational Technical Schools, who have taught at least 20 years in the state of Kansas." It is housed in a one-room reconstructed school in Boot Hill, Dodge City. The school was originally built in 1915 at Haviland, Kansas. Teachers are selected each year for the honor of inclusion. I attended the 1977 induction July 8, 1977 in Dodge City. It was fascinating to hear the dedicated stories of these outstanding educators. The Kansas school teachers certainly have earned an important place in the history of the state.

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[45] "Rural Schools in Southwest Show Pride of Patrons," High Plains Journal (September 27, 1951), section I, page 8, 11.

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READING, WRITING, 'RITHMETIC, AND RECITATION

One can almost hear the chatter of scholars, the shuffling of feet, the slates hitting the wooden desks, the opening of well worn books, and even more of the sounds of learning as one thinks about the deserted country schools. The education in the country schools of western Kansas definitely stresses the basics. Memorization and recitation were important. The quality of the education given was ranked high by former students and by their achievements.

Ruth A. Siegrist rated her country education "superior." She recognized that she didn't have the extra courses, but the basic subjects were covered well. One of the topics she noted about school was the "closeness and friendliness of youngsters."[1] She attended Graden School, eleven miles north of Moreland, in Graham County. This community instilled many traditions in the people. Mrs. Siegrist is very interested in learning, as are a number of other graduates of the area. A few other superior students she noted who attended Graden School included: Warren Tiel, State Bindweed Supervisor; Warren Brant, who earned a doctorate degree; and Stanley Barnett, who is an architect in Wichita. These comments she made about herself and the fact that she not only learned in country school, but found she wanted to learn the rest of her life. These were strong characteristics of most of the people contacted who attended country school. The country schools

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[1]Statement by Ruth A. Siegrist, personal interview, October 25, 1980.

definitely kindled the spirit of most students to appreciate learning for a lifetime. Education was not taken for granted by the rural pupils. Most students felt it was indeed an honor to have the opportunity to gain an education.

A sample schedule for a day at school in District 53 of Sheridan County between 1895 and 1903 follows:

Opening Exercises	
Reader 1st	9:00-9:05
Reader 2nd	9:05-9:10
Reader 5th	9:10-9:25
Reader 4th	9:25-9:40
Reader 3rd	9:40-9:50
Grammar A	9:50-10:10
Grammar B	10:10-10:25
Recess	10:25-10:35
Arithmetic D	10:35-10:45
Arithmetic C	10:45-11:00
Arithmetic B	11:00-11:15
Arithmetic A	11:15-11:35
Spelling C	11:35-11:40
Spelling B	11:40-11:45
Writing	10:45-12:00 noon
Reader 1st	1:00-1:05
Reader 2nd	1:05-1:10
Geography A	1:10-1:25
Reader 3rd	1:25-1:40
Reader 4th	1:40-1:55
History B	1:55-2:05
History A	2:05-2:20
Geography C	2:20-2:35
Recess	2:35-2:45
Geography B	2:45-3:00
Reader 1st	3:00-3:05
Constitution	3:05-3:20
Reader 2nd	3:20-3:25
Language	3:25-3:30
Physiology A	3:30-3:45
Spelling C	3:45-3:50
Spelling B	3:50-3:55
Spelling A	3:55-3:60

Students went to school when they could be spared from duties on the farm, at home, or in whatever the family business may have been. Therefore, early students started their course of study and progressed as far as they could in a school year. Often they would go back to the same level the next

year and then complete a book or reader started the previous year. This process went on with many students until they were 18 to 22 years old.

The earliest schools, such as those in 1863, used whatever books settlers had brought with them as textbooks, because nothing else was available. This meant there was "no uniformity" of material for a class to use to learn to read or to use to learn any of their other subjects.[2] Scholars often used texts that had been used by their parents when they were in school.

Curriculum in the early schools was limited. An 1857 law required schools be taught by a "qualified male or female teacher" and that subjects include reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, grammar, and geography. By an 1885 law, hygiene and physiology were included. Then in 1903 Kansas history was added.[3]

The most commonly used arithmetic texts were the Ray and Robinson books for several years. They were practical and even got into some more difficult problems. The metric system was covered. The following are sample problems from Robinson's Progressive Practical Arithmetic:

"Three men hired a pasture for $63. A put in 8 sheep for 7½ months, B put in 12 sheep for 4 1/6 months, and C put in 15 sheep for 6 2/3 months. How much did each pay?"

"If any army of 1000 men have provisions for 20 days, at the rate of 18 oz. a day to each man, and they be reinforced by 600 men. Upon what allowance per day must each man be put, that the same provisions may last

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[2]F. L. Pinet, "Seventy-Five Years of Education in Kansas" (Address at Kansas State Teachers' Association at Topeka, November 4-5, 1938), (Mamuscript).

[3]Lydia Mayfield, "Old Kansas School Books," Kanhistique (April, 1980), p. 12.

30 days?"[4]

Ray's arithmetic books were used from before the Civil War to the end of the century. Ray's book Primary Arithmetic was the first one. Ray's Practical Arithmetic emphasized banking, surveying, finance, and brokerage more than Robinson did. The following are sample problems from Ray's Practical Arithmetic:

"A ship in latitude 35 degrees 30' north sails 20 degrees 35' south, then 14 degrees 20' north, then 25 degrees 4'30" south, then 6 degrees 19' 20" north, what is her latitude now?"

"At 1 3/4% what sum must be insured on $2,358 to cover the premium and property?"

"The distance between two towns is 13.24037 Km. How many steps of 28.15 inches must I take to walk the distance?"

"A man sold corn for $14.85 and lost 17½%. For what should he have sold it to gain 12½%?"

"My broker sells 50 shares of Chicago and Northwestern, brokerage ¼%. He remits me $2,475. At what percent did the stock sell?"[5]

The grammar books of early Kansas schools were different than today. A much stronger Latin influence was evident. Diagramming was emphasized more. Hoenshel was the standard grammar text after about 1890.

Spelling was stressed much more than today. Often the treat for Friday afternoon was a spell down. Sometimes an entire community participated in a spelling bee. So adults were also very interested in being good spellers.

Readers were treasured by their owners. They were read and reread,

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

sometimes memorized. Part of the time they were the only books a person or family would have. So the compilers of these tried to include selections from some of the best writers; they tried to help broaden the world of the Kansas pioneer. In addition to classics the old readers included some simple poems. Appleton's Fifth Reader included parts by Daniel Webster, Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens, Scott, Byron and Joseph Addison, as well as Coleridge and Southley. It went so far as to include "Influence of the Translation of the Bible on Literature," by William Hazlitt.[6]

Elocution -- ways to read aloud properly -- was stressed in the readers. Fifty-eight pages of the 480 in Osgoods Fifth Reader were devoted to elocution. This included the study of "articulation," "inflection," "circumflex," "accent" and "emphasis," "instructions for reading verse," "quantity and quality," "movement," and "gesture."[7]

McGuffey Readers were used by four out of five students in the United States in the mid nineteenth century. The books were used so widely because McGuffey understood the pioneer child and because he emphasized morality, patriotism, and justice with his selections. The major compiler of these was William Holmes McGuffey, who was born in Washington County, Pennsylvania, in 1800. He lived in a rural area, had many chores and attended a subscription school. He walked miles to borrow books, that he read by the firelight. With his excellent memory he remembered much of what he read. He attended Greenburg Academy and then Washington College. Then he began teaching and went on to be a college professor and president.

By the 1830's schools were beginning all across the country. Truman and Smith publishers looked for a person to write basic books for rural

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[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

schools and decided to ask W. H. McGuffey.

McGuffey and his brother Alexander wrote the primer and six eclectic readers. They were released from 1836 to 1851 and used widely. McGuffey's contract with Truman and Smith granted him a ten percent royalty on each copy up to $1,000 on total sales. Thus McGuffey gained very little economically on the books, but Truman and Smith gave him the bonus of a barrel of smoked hams every Christmas.[8]

Prairie Range School in southwest Kansas started in 1888 in a dugout. The curriculum was typical of the time. Students had whatever books they had brought from "back home." There was no blackboard or tablet to write on. But each student had a slate. Most of these were put together at home and varied in size and makeup.

The teacher used her head and substituted simple items for teaching materials. She used maps in books instead of wall maps; children brought books from home for the library. She got a year of "Youth's Companion" a magazine with many activities in it, and "volumes of the Chatterbox, Harpers Young People and a few books of the right sort."

Often books were read by the pupils aloud and they "played them out" or dramatized the stories. The only visitor was the county superintendent, who came in his horse and buggy. They did visit a gypsum bed and took samples back to class. These were made into "maps," "vases," even a "bust of George Washington."

Also in that spring they saw a tornado form and look like it was going toward the school. There was a cellar under the school, but no door yet,

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[8]"McGuffey's Readers, the Old Classics Are Returning to School," The American Legion Magazine, (September, 1978), pp. 22-3, 44-5.

so the teacher got out the hatchet and was about to cut a hole in the floor, when one of the students said the tornado had turned. The teacher was teased about chasing the tornado away with a hatchet and they also said she should have good discipline.[9]

District 18, Prospect School in Russell County, Kansas, in the 1880's functioned as many others did in western Kansas. The students brought whatever books were available to school to study from. Terms averaged three months, but other districts in the area staggered their terms so pupils could attend more than one school if they didn't have to work and had transportation. Many scholars were responsible for a herd of animals. They would leave their herd near the school and study with the animals, and go inside to recite when it was time for their class to be called. This was not what the law asked, but life on the prairie often necessitated it.[10]

Organization did come to the early schools of Kansas before many other areas. James H. Noteware of Leavenworth was the first state superintendent of schools. He had a meeting of teachers on June 2, 1858 and they appointed a committee of fifteen to work on the selection of textbooks for adoption in Kansas schools. Finally the following were adopted for a time in the mid 1880's: in grammar -- Welds; in rhetoric and composition -- Quackenboss's First Lessons in Composition and Course of Composition and Rhetoric; history -- Wilson's United States; geography -- Cornell's series; arithmetic -- Ray's series; physiology -- Cummings; readers and spellers --

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[9]India H. Simmons, "Deserted Dugout Used As Early School for Youth of the Early Southwest," Dodge City Daily Globe (1929?), p. 8-9.

[10]Martha Bayne, Reminiscences of Mrs. Martha Bayne, a Teacher in the Country Schools of Russell, Lincoln, and Osborne Counties in the 80's, (n.p.) (Kansas State Historical Society Mamuscript Copy 35686), one page.

Saunders series; chemistry -- Porters; dictionaries -- Webster's; and physical geography -- Pitche's Outlines.[11]

Early schools in Barber County included the following subjects in their curriculum: "chart class, reading, language, hygiene, history, civics, and geography." There was one school that noted algebra and bookkeeping. Texts included: McGuffey's Readers and spellers, Eclectic Geographies, Ray Arithmetic, Brown's Physiology, Harne Language, Swinton U. S. History, and Spencerian Writing.[12]

The texts used in Sheridan County in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century included the Myers and Brooks Arithmetic, that included algebra and geometry. Most early students in Sheridan County only had their textbooks as resources. Warner Johnson considered himself privileged because his teacher Ruth More McClain had a two-volume encyclopedia that the students could use for supplementary material. After the first part of the twentieth century Sheridan County used the New Model Arithmetic. This county used Hoenshell's Grammar for ten years. Warner Johnson, who was the County Superintendent in Sheridan County for a number of years, said Hoenshell's was the best grammar text he knows about. Sheridan County even had the author, Mr. Hoenshell, speak to the Sheridan County commencement a number of times.

Quality literature was definitely stressed in the rural schools. Warren Macy remembered that The Classics was one of the textbooks used in Rooks County at Spring Branch School.[13]

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[11]Robert Taft, "A Century of Kansas History," Kansas Teacher (May, 1954), p. 40.

[12]Grace White, "History of Rural Schools in Barber County, Kansas, Especially Julian," (Paper for Topics in Southwest Kansas History, University of Kansas, 1971), p. 3.

[13]Statement by Warren Macy, personal interview, January 29, 1981.

Many early pupils memorized selections from well known authors. Martha Bell who attended Star District Number 81 in Thomas County, learned poems and remembered studying arithmetic, grammar, reading, writing, and in seventh and eighth grades agriculture and Kansas history and American history.[14]

Penmanship was definitely stressed. This was often done in practice books with all the grades working together. Vida Toburen reported that in the Thomas County schools where she taught, they did the oval push and pull exercises. The oval was to get arm movement and the push exercise was to get precision.[15] During different periods different methods were taught. The Spencerian writing method stressed fine lines and pen point fine exercises to help one write better. The Hausen method was used state wide in the 1920's. It was a muscular method, with many ovals, ups and downs, strokes and constant repeating. Often the teacher counted or kept time with music. All the grades usually worked together, with the older pupils using pen and ink and the younger pupils using pencil.

Vocabulary was often emphasized. The Webster's Dictionaries in most schools were used widely. Geography classes stressed places. Most schools had map cases and maps that pulled down. Often students made relief maps out of salt and flour. Memorization of countries, states, capitals, rivers, lakes and much more was common. History classes stressed dates. An example of memorization was that David Jones, a rural student in Thomas County, learned all the rivers in Kansas, all the Presidents, the preamble to the Constitution and many other specific items.[16]

Much of the early work in arithmetic was done on the slate board. When written work was done older students often helped grade papers of younger students.

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[14]Statement by Martha Bell, personal interview, November 10, 1980.

[15]Statement by Vida Toburen, personal interview, November 29, 1980.

[16]Statement by David Jones, personal interview, January 11, 1981.

Kansas developed a course of study that gave rural teachers guidance on what to include in the curriculum and definitely helped standardize the education in Kansas schools.

Music was taught in many rural schools. Often a piano or organ was added to the classroom. Some schools had music teachers from neighboring cities come and teach instrumental or vocal music. The radio classroom, by Catharine Strouse, provided music through the radio to classrooms all over Kansas. For several years in the 1940's and 50's pupils tuned in to their school radios at a certain time each day to have music class with Catherine Strouse, sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education. The Music Book for the Radio Classroom was available to schools and used widely. Common songs included: "She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain," "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen," and "Here We Come A-Wassailing."[17] Much of the music, as other parts of the curriculum, was patriotic, moralistic, or had religious overtones.

The recitation bench was important in the early western Kansas schools. The experience of Denzil Lofgren, a rural Norton County pupil, was typical. He reported that he was more interested in listening to others recite than in studying.[18] Warren Macy, one of the scholars at Spring Branch School in Rooks County, said he learned a great deal by listening to others, as well as by helping others.[19] The recitation bench definitely helped students gain self confidence and give better presentations before a group. It gave a time when the teacher worked in concentration with one group of pupils.

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[17]Catherine E. Strouse, Music Book for the Radio Classroom (Emporia: Kansas State Teachers College, 1947), pp. 1-42.

[18]Statement by Denzel Lofgren, personal interview, October 24, 1980.

[19]Macy, Loc. cit.

Homework varied from school to school. Some schools required a great deal of homework and others tried to keep homework to a minimum because the teachers recognized the responsibilities most pupils had in their rural families. Many families functioned like Warner Johnsons in Sheridan County. He was from a big family that had supper, did the dishes and then set the table for supervised lesson time for the entire family. Even his father and mother helped the children with their lessons.[20]

Country schools had many contests. Once Sawlog School and two other Ford County Schools had a declamation contest. Edna Bell remembered having given a reading of the "Soul of a Violin" that won the contest. She repeated the reading many years later when interviewed about her school experiences.[21] Spelling bees, ciphering matches, and many other types of academic competitions were held regularly in the rural schools. Often awards were given to the student with most credit for winning matches or for special recognition of reading or spelling or the like.

Discipline was seldom a problem in rural western Kansas schools. Mary Bundy, a rural teacher, disciplined by letting the students know they were individuals, humans, and that she expected honesty.[22] Harmony School in Finney County, Kansas, in the late 1940's and early 1950's didn't have many discipline problems. When they did, common punishments were for the students to stand with their nose in a circle or write numbers 1 to 1,000 on the blackboard. Barbara Lowenthal, a student, recognized that students had respect for their teachers, so discipline was usually good. It was

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[20]Statement by Warner Johnson, personal interview, January 3, 1981.

[21]Statement by Edna Bell, personal interview, December 4, 1980.

[22]Statement by Mary Bundy, personal interview, November 29, 1980.

recognized that if a child was punished at school there would probably be more punishment when he got home.[23]

In 1934 when Martha Bell was teaching school, a big dust storm came up. She tried to get to the nearest neighbors and ended up in the ditch with the children. All the pupils and her students finally made it to the neighbor's home. In 1931, a day started with a beautiful spring morning and then the wind changed and they had a big storm. Mrs. Bell tried to get the children to safety and with the help of Mr. Louellen, she did. They had a rope and had each child hold on and walk to Mr. Louellen's home. They were there for three days. There were about six children and one teacher who stayed with the family during the storm.[24]

While Alice Carmen was attending school in the mid 1940's in Ford County, Kansas, a cyclone or tornado came within a half mile of her school, Concord. The pupils and teacher hid in the ditch. From there they watched the winds dissolve. As they did, it looked like worms falling from the sky. Then it stormed.[25]

In 1931 a blizzard snowed all the kids and teachers in at Brownville School, in Thomas County. They had to stay four days at the school. They covered the kids with newspapers to keep warm and had to butcher all the principal's chickens for food. They considered butchering his cow, but it quit snowing. They had ten feet of snow and only got home on a horse drawn sleigh.[26]

In 1946 Barbara Lowenthal was attending Harmony School in Finney County, Kansas. One night a snow storm got so severe that the pupils had

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[23]Statement by Barbara Lowenthal, personal interview, December 25, 1980.

[24]Martha Bell, loc. cit.

[25]Statement by Alice Carmen, personal interview, November 26, 1980.

[26]Statement by Albert Hively, personal interview, November 27, 1980.

to spend the night at the school. They shared what was left from their lunches for supper. The youngest children slept on the sand table and the others on the floor. The teacher made the children feel at home and helped it not be a frightening experience. The next morning Mr. Friesen came on a tractor and hauled all the kids home in a stock tank.[27]

The country school recess time was spent playing many games. Anti over the school house was a common one; fox 'n geese and many other games that required little or no equipment were most frequent. It was only in later years that playground equipment was installed. Track meets and sports competitions gained in momentum over the years.

As was mentioned, the earliest schools often did not have libraries. However, in later years encyclopedia sets and a basic collection of books often were available. In the small schools of the rural areas the libraries that Dale Wing, District Sanitarian, saw were usually a collection of books that belonged to the teacher. In the 1960's Mr. Wing observed books in these school libraries from the 1800's. Mr. Wing's strong interest in books led him to collect some of the books from the schools. An example from Mr. Wing's collection was a 1935 Introduction to Geology that was given to him from one of the rural school libraries.[28] Nichol School in Thomas County in the 1920's was a sample of a school lacking resources. According to Vida Toburen, the only book in addition to textbooks was an unabridged dictionary.[29] However the schools Martha Bell was associated with in the

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[27]Lowenthal, loc. cit.

[28]Statement by Dale Wing, personal interview, November 13, 1980.

[29]Toburen, loc. cit.

same area of Kansas had the Book of Knowledge, an unabridged dictionary, a globe and roll maps as resource material.[30]

The education of the rural country schools was evaluated by the county exams that were given to seventh and eighth graders. In the early years these tests were given in the schools. Later students usually went to their county seat for their tests. When Lydia Bishop gave county exams, the seventh grade test covered physiology, Kansas history and geography. The eighth grade test covered reading, classics, English, history, agriculture, and penmanship. She called the exam a "gruelling ordeal," for which she would review with her students during recess and noon for several weeks before the tests.[31]

The commencement and ceremony at the successful completion of eighth grade was a major event in many people's lives. The graduation ceremony usually consisted of singing, a speaker, and students receiving their diplomas from the county superintendent. As Flo Minor said, "When we went out of eighth grade, we were as well qualified as they are now out of high school, because we didn't have any athletics to deal with."[32] Her attitude reflected a general attitude about completion of eighth grade. Some privileged students did have the opportunity to go on to high school.

The overall quality of education in the rural western Kansas school was high. One of the most redeeming features about rural schools was that the child who completed his lessons could often help others or listen to

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[30]Martha Bell, loc. cit.

[31]Statement by Lydia Bishop, personal interview, October 14, 1980.

[32]Statement by Flo Minor, personal interview, December 2, 1980.

their recitations. The opportunity for leadership was available. Children developed strong individualistic, moralistic attitudes toward life and learning. Upon their solid foundations our present education system is laid. We look forward to an even brighter future as Kansans strive for an even better quality education for future generations.

Donna Jones
Colby, Kansas
April 1982

COUNTRY SCHOOLS AND THE AMERICANIZATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS

Country schools on the western Kansas prairie were one of the major elements that helped the children of settlers learn American customs, history and language. The schools were a stabilizing influence on people with a variety of backgrounds. In 1876, 1877 and 1888, Germans left Russia because the Russian government was beginning to renege on promises Catherine the Great had made. Their young men were being inducted into the service, so they decided to go to Brazil or the United States. The Russian Germans sent scouts both places, and the reports from the United States came back with better possibilities. So many Volga Germans migrated to the United States.

Many of these people with Volga-German heritage settled in the Ellis County area. They were sturdy pioneers who worked hard and felt strongly about education. Schools were started soon after they arrived. However, the early emphasis was on work, and scholars did not attend school when there was demanding farm work. Often children had to quit school early in order to work full time. German and English were taught in most of the schools until World War I when the German was dropped.

Religion played a very important part in the lives of these early settlers. Many of the rural and small town schools in the Ellis County area were parochial. The fact that most of the teachers were members of the Sisters of St. Josephs and the Sisters of St. Agnes or priests was a stabilizing influence. There were also public country schools that served areas near the parochial schools. But many families, such as the family of Leona Pfeifer, decided to send their children to the parochial school.

A typical 1930 school day at St. Anthony's Parochial School in Schoenchen, Kansas, began with mass in the church; then the pupils would go to the school building. Two grades were held in each of the four classrooms. Often subjects were combined for the two grades. Memorization was stressed in these rural parochial schools, as it was in all country schools. The aim was to give the children a basic education, with special emphasis on discipline. Respect for age was important. If a child was reprimanded at school, punishment was usually twice as severe at home.

Mrs. Pfeifer, who teaches German at Fort Hays State University, responded to the question "Did the schools Americanize the students?" with "I'm not sure they did at all." She said the rural students in the 1930's "were Americans with a German heritage." Most of the third generation people now can't even speak German. But there is still a great deal of effort going toward preservation of the German heritage the early settlers brought with them.[1]

Barbara Knoll, a first generation American, whose parents were born in Russia, attended Victoria schools and later taught in rural schools of the area. She taught two years south of Park, Kansas, and four years north of Victoria at Lost Canyon School.

Mrs. Knoll speaks with an accent and definitely carries on a number of Volga-German traditions in her home. She also helped her students in rural school to be aware of their heritage.[2]

Rose Ann Rupp was a Volga German student at Riverside, school district number 30, from 1936 to 1941 or '42. As a preschooler she learned to communi-

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[1]Statement by Leona Pfeifer, personal interview, February 16, 1981.

[2]Statement by Barbara Knoll, personal interview, December 10, 1980.

cate in German with only a small understanding of a few English words. Her parents had attended schools in the area and had German textbooks and German prayer books.

Students at Riverside School were required to kneel on the stage if they spoke in German in the classroom. The teachers wanted the 36 to 40 students to learn English and use it as the major language. There were three Anglo students who learned some German on the playground, but in the classroom the students soon learned to speak only in English.

Rose Ann Rupp's parents considered education very important. A typical school day for Rose Ann Rupp began with roll call, the pledge of allegiance and then classes started. About fifteen minutes was spent in each subject. In her last few years at school, the teacher even made a hot casserole for dinner.

Most of the seats were double or triple so students found it easy to visit. Water came from the Rupp family well right across the road. There were two outhouses, a fuel building, the school, a merry-go-round, and basketball goal on the school grounds. While Rose Ann Rupp was attending school they built a new limestone school. During this time the students went to school in a granary.

The curriculum was similar to all schools. Memorization was stressed. Rose Ann Rupp considered her education "great" with "not as much extra-curricular" activities as today. They definitely concentrated on the basics.

Thus, Riverside School teachers did start Americanizing the Volga-German students who attended their school. As Rose Ann Rupp put it, we "learned to help one another and to work together."[3]

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[3]Statement by Rose Ann Rupp, personal interview, January 29, 1981.

The Frederick Dochow II family originally moved from France to Germany and then to the United States, where they finally settled in the southeastern part of Decatur County, Kansas, near many Bohemian families. The Dochows had six children who attended several rural Decatur County schools.[4]

Schools were important in this area. The Czech settlement in the Jennings area started school right after they started their church. The first one-room sod school was named "Kaspar." In the 1880's school was only held for two months. Miss Letha Pine, a local girl, was hired as one of the first teachers for $18 a month.[5]

The tendency of Volga-German people to emphasize work was evident in Greeley County, as well as in other areas, such as Ellis County. Annalee Hampton, a rural Greeley County teacher, had students from one family who spoke German or Russian in the home. The father kept the daughter out of school so much that she didn't complete the eighth grade.[6]

Also in western Kansas the children of a German family were enrolled in school with Ruby Jacobs. The parents in this family also kept their children home from school many times to help with the work.[7]

Students who started attending country schools often didn't know how to speak English, but most learned quickly. Martha Bell felt she was backward when her teacher, Jessie Pratt, asked her to count on her first day of school at Star School, district 81 in Thomas County, and she counted in German.[8]

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[4]Fort Hays State University. Ethnic Heritage Studies, No. 2 Early Pioneer Families in Decatur County, Kansas, by Lillian Shimmick. (Hays, Kansas: Fort Hays State University, 1979), p. 46-59.

[5]Ibid. p. 75.

[6]Statement by Annalee Hampton, personal interview, December 7, 1980.

[7]Statement by Ruby Jacobs, personal interview, October 25, 1980.

[8]Statement by Martha Bell, personal interview, November 10, 1980.

Many blacks moved to Kansas from the South after the Civil War. There were few opportunities for blacks to purchase land in the South; therefore they moved to Kansas where they were told they would be given land. In 1879 the number of blacks who migrated to Kansas made many white residents fearful, and the first legislature of Kansas made provisions for separate racial schools. This practice was only followed in some communities with populations over 15,000. Education of youth was one of the most important goals of blacks. In the black schools of Topeka in 1880, they insisted on black teachers. A quote from an early Kansas black was "I am going to school my children, if I have to eat bread and water."[9]

Another illustration of the value blacks placed on education was the following quote from a different black man. "I wants my children to be educated because then I can believe what they tells me. If I go to another person with a letter in my hand, and he reads it, he can tell me what he pleases in that letter, and I don't know any better. I must take it all for granted; but if I have got children who read and write, I will hand them the letter, and they will tell me the contents of that letter, and I will know it's all right, as he says it."[10]

Some of the major early black settlements were in the counties of Hodgeman, Barton, Rice, Marion, Graham and Logan. The Nicodemus community flourished in the mid 1880's and grew until about 1910, at which point they didn't get the rain they needed and the economic situation diminished. Even with the difficult times most Kansas blacks of the early twentieth century were in a better economic situation than their counterparts in the South.[11]

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[9]Nell Irvin Painter, Exodusters, Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction (New York: Knopp, 1977), p. 44.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

Rosa L. Stokes, a black lady who attended Harmony Elementary School northwest of Bogue, said she "thinks all children should go to country school..." to "learn how to work." Her rural school experiences were very similar to other students. She learned to enjoy her classes and didn't have much homework. One of the very positive factors was the close working together of her parents and her teachers. Some of her activities included regular spelling bees and helping the teacher with maintenance. Mrs. Ola Wilson, one of the teachers at Harmony, cooked lunch and the students did the dishes. Transportation to Harmony was usually by horseback or walking. When Rosa changed from her country school to the black town school in Nicodemus, she found the city children teased the country children and some problems resulted.[12]

Mrs. Adele Alexander, a black teacher, taught in the Graham County area, from September, 1935 through April, 1943. She was born and attended school in the Hoxie, Kansas, area. She entered Kansas State Teachers College at Emporia as a music major, but had to change her major because of the required private lessons. She did earn her life certificate in intermediate teaching.

She started teaching at the stone Mount Olive School, about three miles north of Bogue and eight miles east of Hill City. Her salary was $40.00 per month "of which she paid $15.00 to $20.00 per month" for board and room. The term was eight months. Mount Olive, as many other schools, had a church and cemetery near it. While Mrs. Alexander taught there, the "black blizzards" or dirt storms were a significant problem. On a clear bright day, within thirty minutes it could get as dark as night and fill the school and other buildings with fine dust. Whenever someone could get Mrs. Alexander and her students, she dismissed school.

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[12]Statement by Rosa L. Stokes, personal interview, December 17, 1980.

A typical day started at 8:15 when Mrs. Alexander arrived at school. The two large families and only child who made up the school population arrived at about 8:45. Mrs. Alexander found the Course of Study by the State of Kansas very helpful. She had seventh and eighth graders come to school on Saturdays so they could review for their county examinations. The courses she remembered teaching were as follows:

First grade -- reading, numbers, spelling, penmanship
Second grade -- Reading, numbers, spelling, penmanship
Third grade -- reading, arithmetic, spelling, penmanship
Fourth grade -- reading, arithmetic, spelling, penmanship, grammar
Fifth grade -- reading, arithmetic, spelling, penmanship, grammar, geography
Sixth grade -- reading, arithmetic, spelling, penmanship, grammar, geography, health habits
Seventh grade -- reading, arithmetic, spelling, penmanship, grammar, health habits and cures
Eighth grade -- history, reading, arithmetic, penmanship, classics, grammar, psychology.

As in all country schools, older students helped younger ones. They had a noon hour and 30-minute recess periods in the morning as well as the afternoon. Games played included ball tag, hop scotch, and hide and seek. Discipline often consisted of staying in one's seat when others played. Part of Friday afternoon was spent cleaning and then often a spelling contest or something similar.

Mrs. Alexander subscribed to "The Instructor" and gained many ideas from it. She made displays, attended State Teachers' Conventions and spent "small sums of my personal money in order to make school more interesting." Her students presented Christmas programs. Mrs. Alexander went on to say that: "Some of the responses I received from former pupils felt that there was more respect for teachers and parents. Mothers remained in the home. Fathers were responsible for providing for the family in most instances. There was prayer in the home and in the school. They believed what they learned was rooted deeply -- and they did not forget it. They believed teachers were more

dedicated and interested. Education in public schools is at a crisis. Children are very different to discipline and some are lacking in the fundamentals. I believe that the children received a good basic education in rural schools."[13]

A letter to Mrs. Alexander from a former student certainly testified to the fact that her students valued education and were encouraged to learn as much as possible. They respected the teacher above all else and studied hard to earn rewards she offered for scholastic achievement. One of the rewards sought the most fervently was being asked to go forty miles and spend the weekend in the teacher's home. This former student went on to say, "Hurray for rural schools and teachers." These sentiments ring true with most former rural students.[14]

In the early 1900's most of the land was homesteaded around the Nicodemus and the Bogue areas; the second generation of blacks often moved south and west of the Graham County area to Logan, Wallace, and Gove counties. A few black families, mostly Howards, settled in Gove County. Another small group of blacks settled in Wallace County, just north of the city of Wallace. These were the Jones'. Their descendants still reside in the area.

Another group of blacks homesteaded land in the rough river area, the Smoky Hill area of Logan and Wallace counties. This land was not as desirable, and the whites in the area had not claimed the rough areas. Merle Nevins described the construction of the early chalk rock schools of this area. Flag rock that was seasoned by the weather was used for foundations. It was usually cut sixteen by twenty-four inches, then a bit and drill were used to make holes in the rock in order to put two pieces of iron and a

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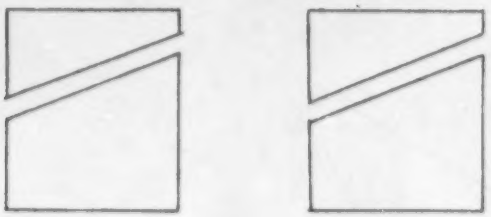
[13]Based on correspondence from Mrs. Gilbert Alexander, February 27, 1981.

[14]Ibid.

wedge between the rocks. A mixture of three parts sand to one part native lime was made to use as cement to fasten the chalk rocks together for the building. The chalk rocks were usually cut flat on one side and angled on the other side as follows:



Then the inside walls were plastered with native lime. The resulting building was heated by a pot bellied stove in which they burned coal. According to Merle Nevins, the school was the only place in the area that was heated with coal. Slate blackboards, usually thirty-six to forty inches wide, the width of the school, were on the front walls of area schools; some even had them on the back. Water being scarce in the area necessitated the use of cisterns.

District number eight had a cloak room built onto the school. The students were predominantly black, with about one-fourth being white. District fifty, number one, had all black teachers. District fifty, number two, had one white teacher, Miss Ada Curry. Punishments Mr. Nevins remembered included staying in at recess and notes to parents. Most of these black schools followed the State Course of Study. They stressed the value of an education, patriotism, and religion. Some of the more popular songs they sang included "The Star Spangled Banner," "God Bless America," "The Lord's Prayer," and many Negro spirituals such as "Old Black Joe." Most of the people moved away from this rough area in the 1930's due to the lack of water, rattlesnakes, and the poor economy.[15]

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[15]Statement by Merle Nevins, personal interview, February 25, 1981.

In Norton County, Denzel Lofgren's grandfather spoke Swedish in his home. However he and his family were so proud to be Americans that they encouraged their children to use English as soon as possible, and they were Americanized quickly.[16]

In Rooks County, Spring Branch School had one Czechoslovakian family, the Yoxalls. They were third generation Americans and knew the English language and were Americanized when they came to school.[17]

French settled in the Damar area. The schools near there in the early 1900's were often conducted in French. Mrs. Barbara Balthazor taught at West Plainville School, district number 76, between Zurich and Plainville.[18] Mrs. Rosella St. Peter was 3 1/2 when she settled in the Damar area in the early 1900's. She was married in 1919 and had three children who attended school in the area. Her family spoke French in the home and sang French songs. She sang French songs in school, such as "When I Was Young and In My Prime" and "Blow In the Morning." Mrs. St. Peter started school when she was 5. About half of the students in the area in the early 1900's were French. Her school included some French and some English.[19]

Mennonites settled in several rural communities in Kansas. One of these was twenty-five miles northeast of Garden City. They started a school named Harmony, that was and still is located on a rural road known as Mennonite Road.

Barbara Lowenthal was a Mennonite child born in this school district.

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[16]Statement by Denzel Lofgren, personal interview, October 24, 1980.

[17]Statement by Warren Macy, personal interview, January 29, 1981.

[18]Based on telephone call to Barbara Balthazor, March 21, 1980.

[19]Based on telephone call to Rosella St. Peter, March 21, 1980.

In her home she was taught German as her first language and then English. She and some of her peers found language to be a problem because sometimes during the first couple of years of school, they had trouble understanding English.

The school was well equipped with inside toilets in about 1950. One of the special items was a sand box about the height of a ping-pong table that was about eight inches deep. They also had a library with several books. The families of the area helped maintain the building and grounds, and used the school for church services.

Former students from Harmony went on in life to be lawyers, Navy officers, builders, successful homemakers, and many other challenging professions.

Barbara's family moved to rural Meade County, Kansas, for the winters after she completed the fifth grade so that her brother could attend a private Mennonite high school. Her parents didn't want their children to marry outside their church. All the rural schools within about a twenty-mile radius were Mennonite. After attending one of them in Meade County, Barbara was enrolled in the rural Meade Bible Academy.

Her father paid $75 to $100 per student per semester for his children to attend this private school, plus extra charges for many activities. There were many parents who felt this private school was important, as evidenced by the fact that when Barbara started there were about eighty students, and later about 45 students when the school closed. Students drove from about a ten-mile radius around the school. Parents and teachers at this school tried to keep students "separate from the world." They were not supposed to socialize with the students from town. This led to rivalries.

Chapel was required every day. Each semester students had to take regular courses plus religious courses. The classes were taught in a large building with about six rooms. There were also other buildings near including

the Chapel. The activities of the students were regulated. Girls could not wear sleeveless dresses or shirts in school. It was considered a sin if a woman cut her hair. There were no dances, no movies, no bowling or other such activities. There was a basketball team, but they could only play other Mennonite teams, so they drove long distances for games. There was singing and the choir was strong. They also had box suppers and programs. The rules made many of the pupils feel restricted, and when many of the graduates went on to church colleges, they "went crazy doing things."[20]

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[20]Statement by Barbara Lowenthal, personal interview, December 25, 1980.